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# **Rethinking The Crisis of Hybrid Identity in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease***

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for a Master Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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## **Dedication**

*This humble work is dedicated to my parents and to my teachers, to those teachers who were kind and encouraging, those who I deeply own respect.*

## **Acknowledgement**

I extol the almighty God for giving me health and patience to accomplish this work .

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Ms.Hadjira Sekhiri , who I am enormously indebted to , for her patience , guidance and advices .

I extend my appreciation and thanks to all the teachers who taught me during my Master degree , and to any teacher who have helped me even with the tiniest word or advice .

Herby , I state that all possible errors in this work are solely mine and I accept to take full responsibility .

## Abstract

The current study explores two remarkable issues in the field of postcolonial literature, that are identity and hybridity. As first target, the study seeks to examine the effects of the colonial presences and hegemony upon postcolonial societies, and how postcolonials perceive colonization. The study also aims at analyzing Chinua Achebe's novel *No Longer at Ease*, and presents how he managed to portray, fictionally, the two notions. Further, this study provides a practical analysis that shows how Achebe uses characters, language, cultural and social context to construct identity in the novel. In addition, it presents how Chinua Achebe subtly tackles the issue of hybridity using the elements of characters, code-switching, religion, language and traditions. For the fulfillment of these objectives, the study is carried in the light of postcolonial theory coupled with Bhabha's theoretical framework. The two enable us to argue that the corpus is a reflection of Chinua Achebe's commitment to demonstrate the crisis of hybrid identity in postcolonial Nigeria. The two methods are also applied to point out the impact of colonialism on the colonized 'identity'. The study conclusion reports that postcolonial societies are indeed torn into two distinct worlds overlapping on each other, as well as postcolonial people who are further trapped between the two worlds and unable to recognize the space they belong to. However, despite this fact the true pre-colonial identity is deeply rooted in them and the desire to restore the native pre-colonial traditions and culture is also present.

**Key words :** postcolonial literature, identity, hybridity, *No Longer at Ease*, postcolonial theory.

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# **General introduction**

## General introduction

In *The Wretched of The Earth* , Fanon declares that “ decolonization never takes place unnoticed” . For most post colonial societies it is the chaos left behind by colonizers that created problematic conditions , and since then everything started to fall apart . Postcolonial subjects find themselves displaced by that experience which made remarkable change in all aspects of the indigenous people’s lives . The devastating impact and the traumatizing condition that postcolonial people went through ,made it necessary to shed light on some particular issues that are fundamental in constructing autonomous and independent nations ,such as identity .This growing need stems from people’s fear and sense of losing a true history , a lifestyle or a native culture , thus identity . These conditions created the issue of identity quest , herby the issue of identity became supreme and prior in most of postcolonial communities.

Across many disciplines such as sociology , psychology , linguistics and philosophy , some terms such as hybridity are recognized as the most common and controversial concepts . In the field of postcolonial literature and studies this concept of hybridity is usually discussed in relation to other terms like identity . The two notions , identity and hybridity , are indeed among the most debatable concepts , and they had given rise to many publications in the field of literature , more particularly the field of postcolonial literature .

The study of literature in some part of the world , such as Africa, is given high attention and regarded as an important discipline . This importance stems from its ability to educate people and rise their awareness on certain issues , especially what concern their homeland and what their ancestors undergo in their way to gain freedom of land and minds . This journey toward salvation has a heavy impact in generating people’s



identities .Exploring concepts such as colonialism , segregation , oppression , marginalization , hybridity and identity is basic and necessary in revealing and expressing the experience of postcolonial societies .These concepts are outstanding in the field of postcolonial literature , and set with noticeable attention specially in African literature .

Herby , in the light of what has been said , the study in hand aims to investigate the issues of identity and hybridity . We will try to explore these two notions and reveal how postcolonial writers shape and construct identity , and how they reflect the struggle and confusion of their postcolonial societies , which resulted from the error in identity due to the colonial experience . As a Nigerian postcolonial writer , Chinua Achebe 's novels can be considered as a mere reflection of the condition of his postcolonial society , which means they deal with the notions of identity and hybridity in a way or another .

Chinua Achebe 's *No Longer at Ease* ,the chosen corpus for this study , sheds light on the plight that postcolonial Nigerians , especially the new young generation , are facing in constructing their identity and locating themselves in that changing and overlapping society . Achebe's work is considered a mere reflection of the crisis of identity in Nigeria as a postcolonial country. Nigeria is a west African country that is rich with diverse tribal groups, ethnic groups , cultures, traditions and language styles. This diversity was intensified by the colonial presence, and after gaining independence Nigerians were introduced to the western world , so they found themselves obliged to co-existed with other non-African culture . For these reasons , we sought for investigating the issues of hybrid identity .

Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* is selected to be explored and analysed since it reveals truly the plight of postcolonial Nigerians 's identity , and it sketches how the dilemma of hybrid identity is constructed in postcolonial literature . The selection of the

topic was guided by two reasons : first , to investigate and explore the concepts of identity and hybridity , and how it is associated to other concepts within the field of postcolonial literature . Second , the study will analyzes how Achebe as a postcolonial novelist , explores and illustrates issues of hybridity and identity in his work *No Longer at Ease* .

Chinua Achebe as the father of African literature , his works , including *No Longer at Ease*, are given remarkable attention and literary gratitude . His works tackles in a way or another the real issues concerning colonialism and its impact and consequences on his postcolonial society . We find that Africans struggle to preserve or regain their heritages and identities is crucial issues in such postcolonial texts . So , since postcolonial subjects live complicated conditions and they are dislocated , how the postcolonial hybrid characters in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* are received by the others , and can we consider their identity as purely new unique identity or just an unconscious imitation of the previous colonizer ?

In postcolonial context, as an example , the concepts of language is strongly tied to identity. It has played crucial role during the colonial era as a mean to control and subjugate colonized people . Colonizers imposed themselves, their language, culture, and literature upon the others. The study is an attempt to rethink the concept of hybridity and explores the interrelationships of the concept with other main concepts in postcolonial context. This study can be a contribution and a reference for students and those with interests in postcolonial studies and literature to enhance their knowledge about post colonialism context ,postcolonial literature and its key concepts . It may also help theme to develop a better and deeper understanding about the concept and how postcolonial novelists were able to portray and present the concept through their works .

In conducting this literary research , the study will follow a descriptive analytical method based on postcolonial theoretical frame. The study also will focus on different ways of collecting data such as adopting some literary texts, books, articles, documents and some trusted websites. The data for the practical analysis will be derived mainly from the primary sources: *No Longer at Ease* .

This work will be presented in form of general introduction, the body in three chapters, and a general conclusion . So it is divided into three main chapters : two theoretical and one practical . The first chapter will be a general theoretical overview about postcolonial literature. Ashcroft et al contemplate in *The Empire Writes Back* : “literature offers one of the most important ways in which these new perceptions of people are expressed” (1). So as first step one needs to understand the nature and the power of that literature since it is also a wide field and an arena for debates. Hence, we will present definitions and some key concepts related to the field of postcolonial literature in general. Also , we will tackle the postcolonial novel , its status within the field and how it is used as a tool by postcolonial writers . At the end, will discuss the debate over the crucial issue of the language of expression in postcolonial literature , and present the different point of view related to the issue .

In the second chapter , we will explore two crucial notions in the field of postcolonial literature , identity and hybridity . consequently , this chapter is divided into two sections . The first one deals with the issue of identity as supreme notion in postcolonial literature , starting with an overview and thorough definitions of the term . Then we will present the identity quest , and see how identity is constructed on the personnel and the social level . Also we will go through the social identity theory and end up with discussing the crisis of identity in postcolonial literature .The second section , will shed light on the notion of hybridity in postcolonial literature . This state of confusion and

dislocation which characterises most of postcolonial societies is the result of the identity crisis, that was due to the colonial experience basically. So, we will start with definition to the concept of hybridity, then we pass through the concepts of Third Space and In-betweenness. The final point, seeks to investigate the effects of hybridity on culture, language, and literature.

The third chapter, is the practical one. It concerns with the analysis of Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, in which we will seek to analyse the complexities and the plight of hybrid identity. We will examine the question of identity as an outstanding theme in most of postcolonial fiction. Then we will present Achebe's Language and style in Expressing Identity in the novel. After that, we shall Explore Hybridity through the novel, and pointing out how the author uses the technique of code-switching to illustrate the change and the mixing worlds in his society. Finally, we will investigate how Achebe portrays the constant traditional and social change and multiculturalism that dominate the postcolonial societies.

**Chapter One**  
**An Overview about Postcolonial Literature**

## **Chapter One:**

### **Theoretical Examination of Postcolonial Literature - An overview about postcolonial literature.**

#### **Introduction**

To understand postcolonial literature and its context, one has to explore and understand first the background of that literature. The field of postcolonial literature is a very wide one, and it has been an arena for debates and criticism. Hereby, in this first chapter we are going to deal with theoretical background concerning the field of postcolonialism, and provide a general overview that would pave the way to carry out this study. This chapter discusses three major sections: First, we discuss the emergence of postcolonial literature, in which the factors that led to the rise of postcolonial literature will be presented along with some key concepts and definitions. Secondly, it deals with the postcolonial novel, its status within the field and how postcolonial writers managed to employ it as an instrument of resistance. As a final point, it will present the debate over the issue of the language of expression in postcolonial literature, and how it is seen from the different point of views of some postcolonial writers.

#### **1. Emergence of Postcolonial Literature**

##### **1.1. Colonialism**

A definition by Ronald J. Horvath describes colonialism as a “form of domination - the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behavior of other individuals or groups” (46). Robert Young’s view on colonialism is that one which “involved an extraordinary range of different forms and practices carried out with respect to radically different cultures, over many centuries” (17). Thus, Colonialism refers to the control and mastery of a country over other territory and its people. It is a process of occupation and domination of inhabited lands and the subjugation of their people, and it affects in many

ways the colonized nations. Colonialism involves the subjugation of one people to another; it is a tool for expansion and a form of exploitation. It takes also various forms and strategies that range from diplomatic pressures to direct military invasions. This process was developed through the expansion of the European powers over the rest of the world and establishing its hegemony. However, Colonialism is not a modern phenomenon: examples of ancient Roman and Persian empires which urged for the greed for territories cannot be excluded.

The term colonialism often can be misunderstood and confused as it is often used as a synonym for imperialism. According to Edward Said, ““imperialism” means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; “colonialism”, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.” , and it is characterized by “the exercise of power either through direct conquest or (latterly) through political and economic influence” (qtd in Young 7). Henceforth, imperialism refers to the imposed sovereignty or the indirect control of a country over another country to gain political or economic power. It is the acquisition of power by a state over another group of people, and the term colonialism is a special form of the more general ideology of imperialism . In the words of Charles E. Bressler, imperialism “is an approach to literary analysis that concerns itself particularly with literature written in English in formerly colonized countries”. (qtd in Ohadike 7). It usually excludes literature that represents the colonizer’s viewpoints , and concentrates on Writings from colonized cultures such as India, Africa, South America, and other places and societies that were once dominated by European cultural, political and philosophical tradition.

In his book *Decolonising The Mind*, Ngugi wa Thiong’o explicates the nature of imperialism, particularly as it affects the culture and language of the Africans. He asserts

that imperialism has absolute effects on the economic, political, military, cultural and psychological wellbeing of the people affected.

Due to the fact that the territories in America, Africa and Asia were spots of fierce struggles for raw materials and natural resources and they had potentials for colonizing powers' economic gain, an ideology of colonialism was developed aiming to cover and justify the violent and inhuman processes and practices of the colonizers. Colonialism was done under the name of civilizing the uncivilized, further it was given names to justify it such as white man burden. These fall justifications paved the way for continuous process of colonialism.

## **1.2. Neocolonialism**

Neocolonialism can be defined as the continuation of the models of colonialism after a colonized nation has achieved formal political independence. In that sense, it means new colonial situation where these countries being subjected to a new form of colonialism. Also, it refers to all forms of control of the ex-colonies over their former territories after political independence in the latter half of the twentieth century; this concept was applied most commonly to Africa. Jean Paul Sartre's *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (1964) contains the first recorded use of the term *neocolonialism*. The term has become an essential theme in African Philosophy, most especially in African political philosophy, and especially with the publication of Kwame Nkrumah's, the first President of Ghana, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* in 1965, the term neocolonialism finally came to the fore.

Neocolonialism is a modern practice, emerged after World War II. It represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most worst and dangerous stage; hence, it is more



difficult to be detected or resisted than the direct control of colonialism . Neocolonialism is based upon the principle of breaking up former large colonial territories into a number of small non-viable states which are incapable and must rely upon the former imperial power. Neocolonialism is generally conceived as a development of capitalism, not by means of direct rule, but through the operations of international capitalism, it enables capitalist powers to control and manipulate subject nations.

In a simple context, neocolonialism is a class name for all policies, infrastructures and agents actively contributing to society, which indirectly serve to grant continuity to the practices known to the colonial era. The essence of neocolonialism is that while the state appears to be independent and have total control over its dealings, it is in fact controlled by outsider economic and political influences (Nkrumah. 7). The new elites brought to power after independence, who are often educated and trained by the colonialist powers, are accused of being unrepresentative of their people and even that they act as subjects or agents for the former colonial rulers , and the economic system and political policy are directed from abroad .

### **1.3. Post-colonialism**

The term Post-colonialism ( or often postcolonialism ) first appeared by the mid-1980s in scholarly journals in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* .By the mid-1990s, both terms became more familiar and gained a heavy purchase in academic and non-academic discourses. According to Ashcroft , the term colonial seemed to have traces back to the late of 1970s in some texts such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* which led to the development of colonialist discourse theory in the work of critics such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, the term was not really used by then. Spivak, for example, first

used the term 'post-colonial' in the collection of interviews and recollections published in 1990 called *The Post-Colonial Critic*. (Ashcroft, et al "Post-colonial Studies" 168).

Robert C. Young sees postcolonialism as "a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed" (2). For Young, that shift of dominant ways means wrecking the world and turning it upside down as if looking from the other side, for a different experience. Postcolonialism thus, challenges the dominant ways of looking at things mainly from Western point of view to give voice to the peoples who are in the margins, so postcolonialism for Young claims the right for all the people on the globe to live equally.

Post-colonialism or postcolonialism basically tackles the effects of colonization on cultures and societies during the post independence period. It is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction. Postcolonial critique focuses on forces of oppressions and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world: the politics of anti-colonialism and neo-colonialism, race, gender, class, nationalism and ethnicities define its terrain (Young .1). Accordingly, it deals with all the cultures affected by the actions of the hegemonic imperial process, and its consequences.

It focuses on the challenges and implications that former colonies struggled with, faced and perhaps still facing to the present day. In literature, post-colonialism is an academic discipline or study that focuses on the human consequences of the subjection and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. It analyzes and explains the impacts of colonialism and imperialism. Postcolonialism is further a reactive phenomenon against the colonial radical critique.

However, there is a strong debate amongst critics and scholars concerning the problematic prefix 'post' in the term post-colonialism. On one hand, "post" in a simple sense means "after" colonialism. Historically speaking, the hyphenated word refers specifically to the period after a country, state or people cease to be governed by a colonial power such as Britain or France, and take the administrative power into their hands. Thus India and Pakistan gained their political independence in 1947 and so became historically 'post-colonial' after 15 August 1947". (Innes .1). In that sense, it carries a chronological meaning that indicates a temporal succession period after colonization, so post-colonialism had clearly chronological meaning designating the post-independence period. As a historical period, post-colonialism for many nations stands for the post - Second World War decolonizing phase.

On the other hand, 'post-colonial' also can refer to a state of land that recaptured its independence, such as post-colonial Algeria, and the first case cannot be applicable on the postcolonial studies, as the basic concern of postcolonial studies centres on the colonial consequences and effects. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin "Postcolonialism as we define it does not mean 'postindependence', or 'after colonialization' for this would be to falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process. Postcolonialism, rather, begins from the very moment of colonial contact. It is the discourse of oppositionality which brings into being." (qtd. in Patricia 12). In that sense, post-colonialism seems to be a reaction or a state of opposition, as well as it is concerned to examine the practices and the effects of European colonialism colonial hegemony on the social, cultural, political and economic states of the former colonies from the sixteenth century up to the present day. Post-colonialism in literature covers the study of theory and literature in relation to the colonizer-colonized experiences in different fields. One of the

leading theorists in this field is Edward Said, with Chinua Achebe being one of its leading authors.

#### **1.4. Postcolonial literature**

As a branch of humanities, literature has a fundamental role in representing and unveiling the lives, realities and problems of the society. Postcolonial literature is the medium through which the writers of the formerly colonized nations represent their nations, share their experience of resistance and reconstruction and portray the devastating impact of the colonial system. For Ashcroft et al, the term postcolonial literature is used to denote all literature covering the culture influenced by imperialism from the beginning of hunder this category due to its relationship to a colonial centre (Britain) that it could be seen as postcolonial .(2)

Postcolonial literature is basically concerned with the challenges of self representation, revival of the native culture, reshaping the colonized portrayal in the colonial discourse and rejecting the Western norms and legacy of colonialism . In this context, Frantz Fanon [as quoted by Edward Said .12 ] states:

“ We should flatly refuse the situation to which the Western countries wish to condemn us. Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdraw their flags and their police forces from our territories. For centuries the [foreign] capitalists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than criminals.”

According to Ashcroft e al postcolonial literatures shares the characteristics “ that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and

asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre” ( 2 ).

Since Postcoloniality represents a state of defence and opposition for the colonized , postcolonial writers attempt to deal with cultural and social problems that are inherited by the colonial system in their writings . They focus on the way in which literature produced by the colonizer distorts the realities of the colonized people , consolidates the images of subjection, racial discrimination and the modernized colonizer who is set against the backward colonized .It is a literature of otherness and resistance , an endeavor by postcolonial writers to tell the story from the point of view of the other and the subaltern who have been ruled and suppressed. Moreover, they produce works that seek to articulate their identity and reclaim their past. Writers as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Chinua Achebe wanted to correct the false image of the colonized countries that has been fabricated by some western writers.

Post-colonial literature further seeks justice of representation since the imperial system establishes itself on the notion of cultural and racial superiority. In this way, their literature is assigned to the colonizer as civilized, governing , self-righteous and racially superior, and gave themselves the right to rule and the characteristics of being brave and right . Meanwhile , they portrayed other subjects as primitive, uncivilized and inferior . (Aziz et al 41).

In addition , postcolonial literature attempts to assert the richness , uniqueness and diversity of indigenous cultures as an effort to bring back identity , history and traditions that were systematically degraded under colonialism . Postcolonial literature includes all literatures that are affected by the colonial process since the moment of the first contact between colonizers and colonized people to the present day .

The year 1950s witnessed the publication of a rich and inspiring texts of postcolonialism : Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and in 1958, Chinua Achebe published his novel *Things Fall Apart*. Also, George Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* appeared in 1960 and Fanon's *The Wretched of The Earth* followed in 1961.

#### 1.4.1 Factors of Existence

In *The Empire Writes Back* , Ashcroft et al state that More than three quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism (1) . In the societies which were formerly colonized by the European imperial power, representation, suppression, resistance, race, identity, migration and gender ,in addition to many other subject matters were and are still themes that represent the starting points and factors that led to the appearance of postcolonial literature .

Additionally, postcolonial literature seeks to correct misconceptions, misrepresentations and to restore the stolen and distorted history. The context of colonial literature “ [...] worked to maintain imperialist ideology by implying that colonized subjects were not fit to govern their own societies because they were infantile and undisciplined” (Ramon 32) .Colonized subjects , their cultures and traditions were often marginalized, suppressed and willingly portrayed in a wrong and humiliating way , to give the impression that they are a lower race ,ineligible to role .

In this context , Chinua Achebe mentioned an incident when he was at the university : a novel by Joyce Cary *Mister Johnson* was presented to them as being the best novel ever written about Africa. This novel had portrayed the Africans in an offensive

way “describing them as ‘demonic’ , ‘naked’ ,’grinning’, ‘shrieking’, ‘ scowling’ , ‘dislocated , senseless and inhuman’ (Ramon 32) .

Herby , postcolonial writers sought for ways to confront the European claims that the white man’s cultures were more superior and worthy than the other races . In this sense , postcolonial literature was created as a state of defence , a reactive move with the objective of unveiling and exposing the severe , inhuman and injustice experience that postcolonial societies have been through .

#### **1.4.2 Some Key Concepts**

Postcolonial literature is a wide domain that is backed with a number of essential keys which can provide those who are interested in this domain with better understanding and guidance. Postcolonial literature in general and postcolonial studies specifically stand at the intersection of debates about many topics, themes, thoughts and theories such as race, colonialism, gender, politics and language and many other key concepts.

Postcolonialism has always been linked to imperialism. Imperialism is a historical phenomenon dates back to the last half of the nineteenth century. However ,the concept and practice are as old as civilization itself, the world has witnessed empires that have extended over vast territories and swallowed large landscapes whether through a direct territorial or military acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas. Imperialism has various meanings such as power, authority, dominion, realm, and empire. It also imposes its own political ideals, cultural values, and often its own language upon a subject state.

Imperialism is presented as a noble mission, a chance for subject people to witness a superior civilization , and as the emancipation from their ignorance and incompetence .

In literature, the concept was propounded by figures such as Rudyard Kipling in poems such as *The White Man's Burden*.

**Decolonization**, Generally speaking, is a period (which for many nations began in the 1950s and '60 of radical social contradiction and conflict that ends in an anti-colonial movement or resistance and led to the creation of free and independence nations. Decolonization represent a true emancipation from cultural, economic, political, psychological forms of colonialism. It also refers to the process of ending and unmasking all the forms of colonization , this includes breaking down the aspects of political institutions and cultural forces. Decolonization does not refer only to the elimination of a dominance power or authority and freeing the bodies, but also means a process of rethinking the concept of power and a process of freeing the minds from colonizer's ideas, thoughts and traditions.

Among the writers of decolonization in Africa, Fanon was one of the prominent figures . His writings are notably extensive on the process and methods of decolonization and of true liberation. Works such as *Black Skin, White Mask* by Frantz Fanon and *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* by Kenyan novelist and post- colonial theorist Ngugi wa Thiong'o are good examples of texts that deal with the concept of decolonization.

Another significant term in postcolonial literature is **subaltern** . The term was first used as a critical term by the Italian communist thinker Antonio Gramsci . According to Gramsci, the term refers to the non-elite groups of people , an inferior rank , a person or group of people , in a particular society , suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history



and culture as active individuals of the same nation . It also denotes those workers who were subject to the power and hegemony of the ruling class . In 1907 the term was introduced by Lord Cromer to refer to non-European peoples .Finally the term subaltern was shaped by its encounter in India with a group of Marxist historians in the late 1970s and early 1980s, who later became known as the Subaltern Studies group and it was adopted to postcolonial studies.

According to Castle the term subaltern refers to social groups , For example, migrants, shantytown dwellers, emigrant tribes, refugees, the homeless that either do not possess or are prevented from possessing class consciousness and who are in any case prevented from mobilizing as organized groups(322) .Historians attempted to recover the silenced voices and value of subaltern groups , they detected moments of actions through the awareness of subaltern groups ,and how they contributed to the politics of colonial India and their remarkable role to decolonization in order to affirm the activity of these groups. Thanks to these attempts, the term subaltern became known in post-colonial studies.

Spivak said : “everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern — a space of difference. Now who would say that’s just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It’s not subaltern .” (qtd .in T. Deivasigaman 4). In postcolonial theory, the term subaltern describes the lower classes and the social groups who are at the margins of a society , They cannot represent themselves and their voices have to be represented by others. Subaltern includes the poor, the oppressed and the exploited who has no right to speak out what are in their minds, not to mention getting their voice heard. The term ‘subaltern’ gained increased prominence with Gayatre Spivak

's 'Can the Subaltern Speak ', which is a commentary on the work of the subaltern studies group .She observed that within the elite class one have no right and cannot talk , the subaltern is not included in that process of representation .Spivak objects to the misreading of the concept. The undefined use of the term and its appropriation by other marginalized, but not specifically "subaltern" , groups. "Subaltern," , is not "just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie.

It is Frantz Fanon who has developed the idea of the **Other** in his writing to be a key concern in postcolonial studies . the "not me " is the Other according to Fanon .( qtd. in Brainerd 6) .In post-colonial context, to the colonizer , colonized subject is the other . There was a process of degrading other non-European people in self-righteous mood under the cover of civilizing , modernizing, humanizing the Other .Some western writers use the term 'other' to refer to the colonized who are seen and represented as inferior , primitive and to set a distinctive division or a binary separation between the superior colonizer and the other or the colonized. In that sense , people were divided and identified according to their race, ethnicity, color, origins and land . According to Michel Foucault, othering is strongly connected with power and knowledge. When we "other" another group, we point out their perceived weaknesses to make ourselves look stronger or better. It implies a hierarchy, and it serves to keep power where it already lies. Colonialism is one example of the powers of othering.

The existence of others is crucial in defining what is normal and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as other " through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and

primacy of the colonizing culture and world view. (Ashcroft et al 169). Europeans see themselves as self-righteous , and imperialist must see the Other as different from the Self , they granted themselves and located in a position of a positive and high self-perception which offers them privileges to maintain authority over the Other in a colonial situation. The term 'others' in post-colonial theory refers to the colonized others who are marginalized, lacks identity, propriety, purity, literality, the one who does not belong to a group, does not speak a given language, does not have the same customs; he is the unfamiliar, uncanny, unauthorized, inappropriate, and the improper. From psychologists point , is not the same case.

## **2. Novel as a Post-colonial Tool**

Bill Ashcroft in *The Empire Writes Back* argues that literature offers one of the most important ways in which the postcolonial period's perceptions are expressed and the day to day realities experienced by colonized peoples have been powerfully encoded and so profoundly influential. And as Christopher O'Reilly in *Post-Colonial Literature* states "The label post-colonial' demands a shift in focus, away from British literature (literature produced by British writers) to world literatures in English." (O'Reilly 7). As a result of this shift it was inevitable for the postcolonial novel to move from the traditional previous novel style and themes to ways of expressing issues that concern peoples, societies and individuals of the time.

Within the field of post-colonial studies more attention was devoted to the novel and the studies of the novel . Due to its power of representation, capacity to assert a nation's identity and history, giving voice to people , depicting and recreating the reality it comes from ; further because it can be perceived by even non-locale recipients , since it is more accessible, communal, and public . Therefore , the novel has been the aesthetic

choice for the majority of postcolonial scholars . ( Postcolonialism And Postcolonial Novel 50 ).

As it was mentioned before , literature as a branch of humanities , and the novel more specifically as a literary genre, have a great role in representing and portraying societies .The novel depicts the reality it comes from ,in postcolonial context it is also concerned with the crisis of representation of colonized subjects in the colonial literary context . As a post-colonial writer Achebe's resentment of the literary colonial portrayal of the colonized made it clear when he wrote about Conrad's portrayal of the African. In the colonial gaze, Africa is deemed as uncivilized, barbaric and bestial. "The language of description of the people in *Heart of Darkness* is inappropriate," says Achebe. "I realized how terribly terribly wrong it was to portray my people — any people — from that attitude." Achebe has stated that writers should change the way the colonized world was perceived and portrayed". So , post-colonial writers are in a state of defence and opposition to retell and correct the distorted reality .according to Achebe , the writers should change the way the colonized world was perceived and portrayed , The writers should take it as a duty to wage a war against the colonized mind by ' re-educating the readers ' .(Chinua Achebe . interview by Robert Siegel . October 15, 2009 ) .

Due to its realistic touch as it portrays and uncovers the real problems facing the postcolonial communities it is derived from , the novel takes a prominent role in the field of postcolonialism . Since it is structured by the postcolonial components , it asserts the native history , nation identity and it also clarifies the anti-imperial movements and the colonized's political consciousness . Post colonial novel takes its basic material and components from the decolonization and resistance experience. Novelists seek to reflect through their narration the devastating impact of the colonial system , also they mirror the struggle against the imperial ideologies, all the acts of

resistance and every attempt to achieve justice . Moreover , the issue of portraying the post independence conflicts and challenges to assure and reshape the distorted identity and history is among the main concerns to postcolonial novelists.

### **2.1. Postcolonial Novel and The Cultural Crisis**

Although when a colonial country achieves its political freedom, the colonial values do not disappear with the independence of that country. The colonial intellectual discourse attempts to reframe the indigenous cultural construct , This impact on indigenous cultures can be traced to colonialism when The colonizer has employed his language, education and religion to dominate the colony intellectually and culturally . Unveiling the postcolonial peoples frustrations and their direct cultural clash with the conquering culture are strong endeavour for postcolonial novelists .

As a response to that, postcolonial writers attempt to encounter that colonial mode by producing literary works that reclaim the annihilated indigenous culture and the distorted identity . The African writers for example attempt to expose the preoccupations of the nation and the nation's cultural and political destiny after the departure of colonialism. Postcolonial fiction can help readers construct an idea of the postcolonial nation and the cultural identity of its people.

### **2.2. History Revival in The Postcolonial Novel**

The colonial institution and its literary context claim the absence of any worthwhile native culture or history , novel as literary genre and novelists advocate a mode of opposition in the face of these false claims as Chinua Achebe declared : ” Africans did not hear of civilization for the first time from Europeans “ (qtd. in Innes 37).

Many of postcolonial narrative texts are essentially based on histories depicting the colonial period and scenes from the native national history , as an effort to correct and

revive the native 's history . Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of The Earth* , 'National Consciousness' chapter , affirms the idea of rescuing the national history from the colonialist sponsorship, he states:

“ The claims of the native intellectual are not a luxury but a necessity in any coherent programme. The native intellectual who takes up Arms to defend his nation's legitimacy and who wants to bring proofs to bear out that legitimacy, who is willing to stir up himself naked to study the history of his body , is obliged to dissect the heart of his people.”(qtd .in Innes37).

The European colonialists depiction of the pre-colonial era as dark and empty of any significance , and the other subjects as primitive with no valuable history have provoked the writers to reconsider the native history and make it a priority in their writings.

In his essay ‘ The Novelist as A Teacher : Chinua Achebes’ Literature for children’ , Achebe emphasizes that , modern Africa whose rich variety of ethnic and cultural identities is complicated by the impact of European colonialism , he intends to teach his people through his novels that they have a distinctive history and past , and not only a “ night of savagery “ as the Europeans claim . For Achebe , To write a novel is to teach , to recover history and affirm native ritual retrieval or as denoted by Achebe 'ritual return'. Consequently, postcolonial novelists seek to recover the native history form the colonial gaze and put it into affirmative legitimacy . ( 7-10)

### **3 . The Language Debate in Postcolonial Literature**

During colonization, one of the main concerns to the colonizer was to distort the identity of the colonized people, through various ideologies and processes in order to keep its hegemony and preserve its right of colonization over the other .

“ One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language . the imperial education system installs a ‘ standard ‘ version of metropolitan language as the norm , and marginalizes all ‘variants’ as impurities .as a character in Mrs. Campbell Praed’s nineteenth-century Australian novel *Policy and Passion* puts it, ‘ to be colonial is to talk Australian slang ; to be...everything that is abominable .” (Ashcroft et all 7) .As a fundamental feature of identity , language was targeted by the colonizer , so usually they imposed or encouraged the dominance of their native language onto the peoples they colonized , or even forbidding natives to speak their mother tongues .Colonized people as well found themselves drifting away from their mother tongue with time due to that imposed internalization , or because they were demoted, humiliated, or even beaten for speaking their native language .

Post-colonial writers are deeply concerned with the creation of an autonomous identity far from the one that was designed by the imperial power , as a primary way in which postcolonial literatures resist colonization. The theoretical and scholarly debate about language is addressed in detail in *The Empire Writes Back* . Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin explore the ways in which writers encounter a dominant, colonial language . Language forms a fundamental part of people’s culture , it is through their language that they express their folk tales, myths, proverbs, history. For this reason, the imperial powers invariably attempted to stamp out native languages and replace them with their own. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out, there are two possible responses to this control - rejection or subversion. ( 284) . However , the debate over the issue of language in post-colonial context still have not yet reached a consensus .

In one hand , some postcolonial writers and activists advocate a complete return to the use of indigenous languages. Most radical among those writers who have chosen to turn away from the colonizer language , Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Gikuyu writer from Kenya , who started writing in English before turning to his mother tongue . He states in his book *Decolonising The Mind*:

“[A] specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history. Written literature and orature are the main means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries. Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other ... Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orator and literature, the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world ... Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world” .( 15-16)

This group believes that the treatment of a distorted identity must include a strong consideration of language. They refuted the notion that the colonizer languages ,as superior , makes it easier to reach a wider audience , instead they argue that it rose to such a status by means of colonization of other nations and oppression of their languages . People through language describe their world and by it also understand themselves , so they should embrace and restore their native languages by writing and speaking them , and stand for an outright rejection of the colonizer language , especially with the emergence of an effective post-colonial voices .



For them the connections between language and colonization is highlighted as the colonizer language is a “cultural bomb” . Ngugi notes in *'Towards a National Culture'* that: " by acquiring the thought-process and values of his adopted tongue ... becomes alienated from the values of his mother tongue, or from the language of the masses" (16). With the continuity of using it there is a continues process of colonialism , and it can even installs a new dominance , more insidious, form of colonialism . Westerners use language as a tool to keep dominating other nations while suppressing languages, cultures and identity of those nations.

As a consequence , they call for expressing identity in the native language , as well as their models of struggle can be moved out and translated for other people in other cultures in other parts of the world . In that sense, language and culture , thus identity are inseparable, and therefore the loss of the former results in the loss of the latter.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Decolonizing The Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* is an important source that provides a clear understanding of how the colonial and imperial powers managed to maintain a strong hegemony and control over their colonies and suppress subject people , including their culture , language and traditions . it was a process of degrading , humiliating and suppressing the colonized language , which had a sharp impact on colonized subjects perceptions of themselves . During the colonial period , when Wa Thiong'o was attending school in Kenya, he experienced the “monto” . Some schools in Kenya (still) used varied objects to humiliate those students who speaks their native tongue , or African languages , in school. Being caught speaking Gikuyu in school was a humiliating experience as one would be physically beaten or publicly humiliated by being made to wear a “monto” around their neck with demeaning inscriptions (*'Decolonizing The Mind'*). Educational, administrative and religious institutions had conducted life in the colonies in the language of the

coloniser. Speaking it would often mean access to privileges, while speaking only African languages could mean economic disadvantage at best, physical punishment at worst. (Rosemary 32-33) .

"The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (Ngugi 282) . Colonialists not only use their hegemony and military forces to exploit and control their colonies , but they also strategically managed to control their minds through control of their languages and their culture. Wa Thiong'o, (1994) argues that this mind control destabilized the African's or the colonized perception of himself. He was taught that everything about him was inferior and backward while everything about the white man was superior and as such, desirable. "To control a people's culture (and language) is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others" (442). The mental control was reached through a strategic colonial process of suppressing the other 's languages and cultures , and defining them as inefficient and generally primitive.

Furthermore , even when colonized subjects learn the colonizer's language , their variety of language is often underestimated or not accepted by the "owners" of the language. "after all the literary gymnastics of preying on our languages to add life and vigour to English and other foreign languages, would the result be accepted as good English or good French? Will the owner of the language criticize our usage?" (Wa Thiong'o 436).this is a response to scholars like Achebe that argue that English or the colonizer's language can be transformed and used to meet the cultural needs of Africans or colonized people .

On the other hand , some writers , like Chinua Achebe who is considered to be one of the most influential novelists of Postcolonialism , advances the need for colonized

people to embrace hybrid language . Postcolonial writers who continued to write in the colonizer's language have been subject to criticism although , they have helped to create important postcolonial literature . However , These writers managed to manipulate their own language as well as the colonizer language to fight colonization and produce a separate postcolonial identity . They tackle outstanding issues concerning national identity and colonialism. Although , these writers may write in the colonizer language , but the themes they target are vigorous rejection of western ideals and colonization , These authors turned the colonial language onto a tool to represent the colonized communities experience .

Ashcroft seems to support Fanon's famous declaration "to speak a language is to take on the world," in that sense he argues that a colonial language gives access to authority. Through an unavoidable process , the speaker absorbs the culture from which the language emerges . Ashcroft finds that discourse appropriation can result in a "comprador identity" that emerges "through the act of speaking itself, the act of self-assertion involved in using the language of the colonizer" (Francis 63).

Achebe commented [in a talk at West Chester Univ.] that : " The British did not push language into my face while I was growing up.' He chose to learn English and eventually to write in English as a means of ' infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying him from within.' . 'It doesn't matter what language you write in, as long as what you write is good ' , he stated. 'Language is a weapon, and we use it ' he argued." There's no point in fighting a language " (qtd. in Gallagher ) .Colonialism with all its evil bring also its language as part of a package , this language is a powerful instrument that can act as a resistance tool and serves colonized people literature , so its is not reason enough to reject it at all just because it is un-African . (Achebe 619 ) .

In 'The African Writer and the English Language' Achebe argues that the aim of using English as a world wide language or the colonizer language in general is to manipulate it, and make it serve his own particular voice and culture, not to use it as a native speaker. Achebe believes that, while there was no need to convince the Igbos that they had been oppressed, there was a great need to tell the story of that oppression to the rest of the world. Consequently Achebe and his corroborators are in favour of using the colonizer's language since it can reach a global audiences and challenge their perceptions about Africa and further unveil the experience of those who have been oppressed.

The debate over the postcolonial language issue between the two parts extended beyond the question of using the native language to enrich their own languages by helping African readerships flourish, or using the colonizer's language to reach a large audiences to challenge the distorted perceptions, the debate is basically about post-colonial identities.

## **Conclusion**

Through this chapter, we tackled postcolonial literature and tried to explain the main factors it stems from. Also we presented some of the most familiar concepts in the field of postcolonial studies. Then, we tackled postcolonial novel, its status within the field and presented how postcolonial writers managed to turn it to an instrument of resistance. As a final point in the chapter, we attempted to present the debate over the issue of the language of expression in postcolonial literature, and how it is seen from the different point of views of some postcolonial writers.

**Chapter Two**  
**Identity and Hybridity in Postcolonial  
Literature**

## **Chapter Two :**

### **Identity and Hybridity in Postcolonial Literature .**

#### **Introduction**

Besides the colonial experience, the rapidly changing society and the increasing mobility of people, all together had noticeably affected the genuine identity of most people . Postcolonial identity in particular is shaped by the colonial intruder experience coupled with the native traditional ones. The latter, melted and mixed to generate new identities .

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first one deals with the issue of identity in postcolonial literature, including definitions, theoretical backgrounds and some of the basic elements that constitute the postcolonial identity. Also it goes through the quest for identity, its construction and identity crisis. The second section presents hybridity in postcolonial literature. Starting with definition to the concept of hybridity to finish with Third Space and In-betweenness, it discusses hybridity in relation to culture, language, and literature.

#### **1. Identity in Postcolonial Literature**

##### **1.1. An Overview about Identity**

The question of identity is the most controversial issue in postcolonial studies as well as literature. It can be regarded as the most important as well because of its crisis that exist in all postcolonial communities , due to the circumstances and conditions of post colonial era that faced newly freed countries in their search and formation of their autonomous identity; the crisis that floats on the surface.

The issue of identity is not clear or fixed: this is what basically led to the crisis that becomes a phenomena. As Mercer argues: “ identity only becomes an issue

when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” ( 43). Thus, when the indigenous identity of the colonized was oppressed and forged by the colonial hegemony , this led to growing feeling of disorientation and doubt , hence an identity crisis .

According to Oxford English dictionary 1999 (10<sup>th</sup> edition), identity is defined as “[t]he fact of being who or what a person or thing is ” (705). In postcolonial context , Beller and Leerssen proclaim that “identity becomes to mean being identifiable, and is closely linked to the idea of ‘permanence through time’: something remaining identical with itself from moment to moment ” (1). Furthermore, they call the other side of identity as referring to the synchronic meaning of the concept of identity as the “unique sense of self” (4) and the ipse identity that means and refers to a person's self-esteem.

The term identity can refer to the state or the reality of being whom or what a person is , what sort of person he or she is and how they are related with others. It is, therefore, the condition of ‘ being or becoming ’ that characterizes one from the other. So identity is not just individuals' ideas and concepts on themselves , but the shared relations with their society. However, in the postcolonial perspective, the term is considered problematic and complex concept to define. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

The term also is linked to the 'other ' in a sense that we recognize ourselves ‘ us’ with the existence of the ‘ other’ . “ Otherness” is a twofold feature in postcolonial era. According to Sinha "both identity and difference, so that every other, every different than and excluded by is dialectically created and includes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture even as it rejects its power to define" (qtd. In Dizayi 1000). So , Sinha argues that both identity and difference in that every other is excluding the different that is a stranger from the values, traditions and meanings of the colonizing culture even as it rejects its power to define .

Since identity is not stable and fixed notion as Hall confirms : “ Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses” ( 10) , and with the impact of colonial legacy which was multi dimensional , besides there was different consequences of colonialism in different locations . Hence, the issue of identity appeared in different shapes and forms.

In his interesting essay “Cultural Identity and Diaspora ”, Stuart Hall claims that identity is always in a changing manner which makes it as a concept really problematic . He regards identity as being “ not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact with the new cultural practices ” . He also perceives that we should not think of the concept of identity as a production, yet it is shaped within its representations and never outside , thus for him, the concept is an ongoing process (222).

According to Venn, identity refers to the aspects that qualify subjects in terms of categories such as race, gender, class, language, ethnicity, status and nation hence in terms of recognized social relations and sense of belonging to groups (79). In 2006, he also goes forward assuming that “ identity is an entity that emerges in relation to another or others; it is a plural self” (2)

Hereby , in the same vein, Kathryn Woodward suggests that,

“ Identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live . . . it gives us an idea who we are and how we relate to others and to the world in which we live” (Woodward 1)

Thus , since identity is a relational term, it can be defined by similarities as well as differences, i.e. by binary oppositions . for example as self / other, white / black, master / slave, etc. In addition, identity enriches social relations as being reciprocal. She



contends that , one may confront some struggles between overlapping identities from different positions, people and communities.

Identity is pivotal and regarded as a reference when determining who/what an individual , a society or in a larger scale a nation is . Consequently, Identity can be categorized into two initial sorts , self-identity and social identity. In views of Barker, it is “the conceptions we hold of ourselves we may call self-identity, while the expectations and opinions of others form our social identity ” (165). Society plays an important role in developing and determining one’s self identity . So accordingly , identity is a matter of self-description and of social ascription , and the latter affect the way we perceive ourselves , we become who we are based on the foundation which has been surrounding us while growing .

Zegeye contends that “ identity is open-ended, fluid, and constantly in process of being constructed and reconstructed as individuals move from one social situation to another, resulting in a self that is highly fragmented and context-dependent ” (1). In that sense , identity is a lifelong process that is in a constant change depending on the social context and circumstances which can be the source that gives rise to new entity.

Meanwhile , for Berger and Luckman in *The Social Construction of Reality*, identity is objectively defined as a location in the globe and subjectively appropriated along with it. The latter is considered as a tool which differentiates individuals of a certain part of the world from other members. Hence, identity refers to manners and ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished apart from others. (4).

Furthermore, when Ngugi conceived that :

“ it is not possible to express moral, ethical and aesthetic values, using the language of someone else, since language contains the conception of right and wrong,

good and bad, beautiful and ugly, courageous and cowardly, generous and mean. ” ( ‘ Decolonizing’ 14).

He claims as anthropologists presuppose that , identity is seen as all shared heritage starting from the common set of values, customs, traditions and relationships that govern certain groups and individuals within certain community. Thus, the individual's identity is accordingly sharply influenced and shaped by those values and mores inherited in the society a person lives in.

From another perspective, Bhabha hypothesizes that when defining postcolonial identity, language and place are fundamental features to consider , as John McLeod reported his saying that after colonialism, indigenous societies find themselves in what he calls 'moment of transit' wherein both place and time overlap and cross to produce and result in "difference and identity " (217).

All meanings and definitions of identity that are provided above are the accumulative result of history and present , they are the product of observations of the present and changes through the history . Identity is highly motivated by historically, geographically, socio-culturally circumstances . Consequently, it relates individuals with their social world and functions as a pivot between the two.

## **1.2. Identity Quest in Postcolonial Literature**

Postcolonial literature discusses the change in cultural identity as a serious issue. Since that, right from the beginning, the goal of the colonial powers has always been the same that is subverting, uprooting and falsifying the cultural identity of the indigenous people. This created a burden for postcolonial authors as Tiffin notices:

“ The dismantling, demystification and unmasking of European authority that has been an essential political and cultural strategy towards

decolonisation and the retrieval of creation of an independent identity from the beginning persists as a prime impulse [sic] in all postcolonial literatures ." (qtd . in McInnis 'The Struggle of Postmodernism and Postcolonialism ' ) .

Thus postcolonial writers want to deconstruct European authority and identity to re-establish their own unique one . Postcolonial novels depict the implication of European hegemony over postcolonial societies and tells the story from the Perspective of those who were silenced for long time . Postcolonial writers seek to generate and reconstruct their identities through their fiction. So postcolonial literature tackles identity crisis as a major theme , in addition to the way postcolonials recover from a long time of oppression .

Das portrays that , postcolonial literature emphasizes identity quest through the themes it sketches and language it uses , as postcolonial writers use characters to speak their minds to reveal the basic issues related to their identity (72). In the same vein, it is said that postcolonial literature contributes to shape the new society which transpires after colonialism. Consequently, one of the significant goals outlined by postcolonial writings as put forward by Boehmer is "the quest for personal and racial cultural identity built on spiritual guardianship of traditional laws; the belief that writing is an integral part of self-definition; the emphasis on historical reconstruction; the ethical imperative reconciliation with the past." (221).

Coulmas launches that identity is not only something that is inherited but relatively an energetic and multifaceted process that can be moderately adapted (178). also Ien Ang idea about the concept of identity is that , it is an ever changing and is constantly

being shaped and conditioned by the environment and culture we were born and grow into (24) , and According to some literature scholars such as Gergen , Norton Peirce , Sarup and Weedon , identity is neither a stable nor a fixed phenomenon rather , it is a coherent entity that is shifting and changing, so internally in conflict. In other words, it is transformational namely through time and space. In that sense, identity is never fixed or stable and it changes according to the surrounding circumstances such as the education we have received , the culture we have been taught and the society we lived in. Hence, any political, social or cultural change, can influence the development of our identity. People who live in a society that has been through colonial experience, in particular, are more likely expected to experience an identity crisis or confusion to a certain level.

Therefore, the colonized subjects' identity became forged by the colonial oppressive process that resulted in the occurrence of longitudinal features that affected the postcolonial identity; writers and writings as well. From this perspective, Albert. J Paolini hypothesizes in *Navigating Modernity* whether if postcolonialism is considered to take a crucial part in the fight against all forms of discursive power in the shaping of identity; hence, history precisely plays a remarkable part as well. (51). It is the danger of a forged and unstable future that creates the struggle for identity in the postcolonial psyche of the colonized peoples.

Fanon contends the impact of colonialism and its consequences on natives who find themselves struggling to find their selfness after a long journey of loss, "examines the experience of having to wear "white masks" to get by Europe, of having to bend one's own identity so as to appear to the colonizer to be free of all taint of primitive native traits " (qtd. in Dizayi 1001).

Identity is never very important in life until this identity is lost. It is this concept of loss that runs deep in colonial and postcolonial literature. The loss of one unified past, a culture, a way of life is the tragedy that marks the lives of the colonized people, and postcolonial writers attempt to portray this tragedy through their works, where questions of "who am I?" or "where I belong to?" such self-adjustment questions are almost raised in any piece of literature especially in the postcolonial era (Ninkovich 16). Even though many postcolonial writers managed to portray the issue of identity with high excellence, none of them actually suggest the solution to that question. So, colonized nations are going through a process of constant search for their authentic selfhood. Robert J.C. Young highlights that this dilemma is out of peoples' feeling of lost and ambivalence, thus it causes estrangement and a cultural clash that result finally to leading to a new space that is absolutely different which he named hybrid genre.(74) .

In Duncan's *Self, Community and Psychology*, Fanon assumes that identity is a dynamic and ever-changing compromise of people with the world surrounding them, because they attempt to find their space within that world (6). To say that, identity has always been hidden in the people's vigorous way of explaining themselves to others.

Also, Bulhan assumes that the identity of 'other', which suffers 'alienation', passes through main stages. The first one, is the identification of the aggressor, resulting in the assimilation and the detachment from the mother culture. In here the 'other' experiences the highest of racial alienation; so as to understand oneself transpires only through the oppressor's view point (qtd. in Duncan 6-16). Fanon named this group 'the without a horizon' (qtd. in Duncan 6-17). He uses that concept referring to the failure to

sustain new positive identities after a long period in time of suppression and fear. On the other hand, the second phase, is transnational; are those who reject the colonizers culture. they are exemplified as the negritude. Thus, the racial alienation is severely conciliated. In the third stage, people change their social status to suit their social political location. For Bulhan, these stages cannot only be separated, but rather they might happen at any moment to any single individual. (qtd. in Duncan 6-17).

From Edward Said's point of view, identity construction have an influence of power. it is the capability to struggle and resist, so as to restore oneself as a postcolonial , anti-imperialist and dependent subject. In other words, the formation of the personal character necessitates contextualization as identity is shaped by what people make themselves rather than by their oppressive discourse (" Culture " 112).

On the contrary to what Edward Said adheres, Homi Bhabha ,in his *The Location of Culture*, founded his striking elements of identity shaping under the influence of Foucault's idea of power. Bhabha introduced the new concept of hybridity. Moreover, he derived that the " interweaving of elements of both colonizer and colonized challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity. " (Meridith 2). He also continues to discuss that there is another ' in- between ' entity which he called 'Third Space'. (4)

The search for one's identity and history is one of hardest tasks for the indigenous people and it is what provokes postcolonial writers to seriously deal with this issues in their writing . The latter is the attempt to free the oppressed nations from the tyranny and authority of their oppressors , and its unfair policy conducted for decades

during their sovereign of the colonized countries . “ The postcolonial quest seeks mastery not in the first instance over land or other peoples, but of history and self ” (Boehmer 201-202). Thus, those people find themselves in a dilemma , confused and struggling to know their real identity as they feel detached from their ancient and native history , neither they are attached to the present atmosphere.

### **1.3. The Construction of Personal and Social Identity in postcolonial context**

#### **1.3.1. The Construction of Personal Identity**

To explain the meaning of identity in personnel sense, the measurement becomes hard, since the definition of personal identity bears many possibilities as people define and perceive themselves in different ways. Self-definition or self-understanding vary from one person to another:

“ Once again, however, it is apparent that there are many different ways that a person might define who he or she is. Which one corresponds to personal identity? And “self understanding” is really too broad and vague to be right. Many things might reasonably be included in ‘self-understanding’ that we would not say are matters of identity ”.(Fearon 20).

Personal identity is relative as each one defines himself accordingly to what is important and essential to him . “ When we say that my identity is “who I am,” we mean “who I really am,” in some sort of essential or fundamental way. We are talking about an aspect of ourselves that is in some way important to us” (qtd .in Fearon 20) .

Charles Taylor *In Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, seems to take this approach. He says: “... the question of identity ... is often spontaneously phrased by people in the form: Who am I? ... What [answers] this question for us is an understanding of what is of crucial importance to us” . He proceeds by putting restrictions

on the things identity consists of and the sense in which they are important : “My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose” .Thus , Taylor’s interpretation of personal identity is the personal moral code , a set of moral principles, ends, or goals that the person uses as a framework or a guide to his actions . (qtd .in Fearon 20-21).

According to Fearon , the ‘ question of identity ’ is frequently interpreted to be a question about personal style , so your personal identity may be expressed as that which distinguishes you as an individual from other individuals such as the way you dress , speech, cultural likes and dislike. For that reason, considering personal identity as a fundamental moral orientation is too narrow.(4).

Consequently , from another perspective , personal identity is defined as a set of concepts and principles that one develops about himself . It evolves over the core of one's life , including the things that one may have control over or the others that he has not. Also it deals with the person's ability and appropriate conditions to persisting through time to be the same person. It is the question of duties that one makes in order to do what is good or what ought to be done, what he likes, or the judgment he makes in a socially constructed situation . According to Fearon the definition of personal identity is :

“ [...] a set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person thinks distinguish her in socially relevant ways and that (a) the person takes a special pride in; (b) the person takes no special pride in, but which so orient her behavior that she would be at a loss about how to act and what to do without them; or (c) the person feels she could not change even if she wanted to. ” (25)



Hence, Fearon through that , reveals that personal identity is based on the ground of what and how individuals identify themselves within their communities.

### **1.3.2. The Construction of Social Identity**

Tajfel (1972) ; Hogg and Abrams (1995) explained that social identity is the individual's knowledge of the sense of belonging to a particular social group in addition to the emotions and values conveyed to him or her. Thus , Social identity relates to how we identify ourselves in relation to others according to what we have in common . for example, we can identify ourselves according to religion or where we're from.

In simple terms we can refer to Social identity as both , the self-definition and the societal self-definition within the social context and what the individual ascribes to as values and mores of his atmosphere. It is, therefore, the social community that identifies its members if truly possess the inherent attributes of the group. Personal identity and social identity are basically social in origins simply because both are social outcomes.

### **1.4. Social Identity Theory**

It was Henri Tajfel and Turner John 's greatest contribution to psychology that developed the most basic conceptual components of social identity theory .Social identity refers to a persons' sense of who they are based on their group membership , Individuals define themselves in regard to social groups. Tajfel's theory advocates that the groups such as social class, family or a football team etc, which people belonged to, were an essential source of pride and self-esteem. These Groups give people a sense of social identity- a sense of belonging to the social world. In other words he proposed that the concept of identity is based on the social categories created by individual's society. He claims that We tend to divided the world into 'them' and 'us' based through a process of social categorization, i.e. we put people into social groups. Tajfel proposed that stereotyping, or

putting people into groups and categories, is based on a normal cognitive process: the tendency to group things together ( Gazi 1781.82).

Hogg and Abrams presuppose individuals derive their identity or self-understanding “ in great part from the social categories to which they belong ” (19). This self-definition, they add, is a dynamic process “ temporally and contextually determined, and [...] in continual flux”. Likewise, Sherman Hamilton et al. viewed that the negative identification with a valued group will certainly have a negative impact on one’s level of self-esteem (88-89). Individuals define their own identities with regard to social groups and that such identifications work to protect and bolster self-identity .

According to these scholars, this approach is essentially established on three mental processes in evaluating others as ‘us’ or ‘them’ ; i.e , ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’. Categorization is the initial step , for Turner et al. it is a process whereby we classify objects in order to identify and understand them , some example of this categories; black, white, professor, student , so we categorize people, including ourselves ,in order to understand the social environment . Because when we assign people to a category then this tells us things about those people. Similarly, we find out things about ourselves by knowing what categories we belong to. In this, the self is reflexive, it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications. This process enables us to define appropriate behavior according to the groups that we and others belong to. An individual can belong to several groups at the same time (281-282).

In the second stage, social identification: individuals adopt the identity of the group they have categorized themselves as belonging to. Tajfel explained that social identity is the individual’s knowledge sense of belonging to a particular social group in addition to the emotions and values conveyed to him or her. So for example when you

have categorized yourself as a student, the chances are , you will adopt the identity of a student and start to act in the way you believe students act . Also There will be an emotional significance to your identification with a group, and your self-esteem will become bound up with group membership (282-283). Tajfel in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, defines social category as our knowledge of ourselves as members of a social group along with the value and emotional significance of this membership .

The final stage is social comparison. Once individuals have categorized themselves as part of a group and have identified with that group then they tend to compare that group with other groups . In social identity theory, people firstly categorize their group apart from the others , regarding positive values, traditions, norms, etc. And, have identified with that group. Then, they ascribe to themselves by comparison and differentiation which others do not possess. (283-284). In order to maintain their self-esteem , the groups need to compare with each other . Hence , the two categories identify themselves as opponents and different , then they are automatically forced to compete .

### **1.5. Identity Crisis**

As it was mentioned earlier, postcolonial literature themes are wide-ranging, however portraying the struggles and the condition of the colonized subjects is the predominant in addition to the attempt maintain an autonomous native heritage and history, hence a national identity. Indeed , identity was the basis of almost all postcolonial fiction, since all themes and characters are employed to portray the oppressed people , the postcolonial nations sufferance and sense of loss .

“ Any piece of writing is a product of its time, [...]for the present it will suffice to say that identity was not by any means the single problem which occupied the minds of those who sought to dismantle empire. But it is one that still draws particular attention.”(Boehmer 8)

Postcolonial theorists and critics give prior importance to the issue of identity and its Crisis , Ashcroft et al. as well state that , postcolonial crisis of identity is resulted out of displacement. When values and mores of indigenous cultures alongside with the harsh meeting of two miscellaneous cultures, an excessive conflict result in an internal clash, consequently , a valid and active sense of confusion, dilemma and detachment. (The Empire 8-9).

In his article ‘A dilemma of Caribbean Populace: Post-Colonial conflicts and Identity crisis in Derek Walcott’s Plays’ , Sheoran declares that , what led postcolonial subjects’ dilemma of identity is simply , because societies and individuals that once were colonized, they became badly confused to confront their genuine identity (2). Thus , it is the chaos left behind by colonizers which create problematic conditions. It challenged the newly freed nations and let the crisis floating on the surface.

From another perspective, Davis states that identity is apparently not that important until lost .For him it is the sense of losing a past, a lifestyle or a native culture which creates the crisis . Mercer as well seems to agree with Davis and maintains that “ identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty ” (43).

From this perspective, Tessler et al. assert that , the notion of identity crisis is born out of the idea of imitating the other ' Occident ' , who are thought to be

superior , in order to reach modernity and development to leave behind all past inferior practices . consequently , the latter, lead the indigenous society to losing one selfness for the sake of the other . Once colonized people become more insecure and less sure of what they really are , or were, or will be , and when the change is great enough, then the past fails to inform the future and must either be rejected or reinterpreted ( Cheriet 49).

In the same vein , Boehmer uses what psychoanalysts postulate, “ that self-identity is constituted within the gaze of another” (qtd.in Cheriet 49). With the growth of the Empire, the sense of inferiority that invaded the colonized state of being was unacceptable. The imperial identity spread over the old identity of the colonized and thus immortalized the notions of class division and racism(32). Because of that, it is said that due to the strong belief in theories about racial and cultural supremacy that the empire ruled and held control over these people ( Cheriet 49 ).

According to Ninkovich “an identity crisis is a period of disorientation in which values and relationships once taken for granted are thrown into question. Questions of self-adjustment that bedevil individuals caught up in an identity crisis like “who am I?” and “where do I belong?”( 16). Agreeing with his colleague, Paolini adheres that “to continue the resistance to (neo)colonialism through a deconstructive reading of its rhetoric and to achieve and reinscribe those post-colonial traditions... as principles of cultural identity and survival ” (64) . Hence , he enforces that the solution to resist that sense of loss of the national identity and the peoples' feeling of uncertainty , which emerges as a result of the colonial strategies aiming at erasing the genuine traditions and cultural identity, happens in one condition which can be a decisive rebel against the colonial powers along with embracing the native legacy.

## **2 . Hybridity in Postcolonial Literature**

## 2.1. An Overview about Hybridity

“ No One Today Is Purely One Thing ” (Said 336)

The term hybridity has recently become one of the most complicated concepts that is tightly related to identity construction under colonial pressure . consequently , postcolonial literature, as Andrew Hammond asserted, made the notion of hybridity a very crucial one in its context, as it deals with picturing out how the postcolonial subjects hold their original practices together with imperial ones (222) . It is born out of the confusion that was created by the colonial hegemony, a confusion that lasted even after the formal decolonization as Fanon declares , “ Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally”( 36).

Hybridity has appeared as a socio-cultural concept that refers to the cultural mixture and fusion in Africa during and after the colonial period . It is essentially associated with the emergence of postcolonial discourse, particularly, African postcolonial discourses. This latter is characterized by the study of the effects of mixture upon identity and culture.

For Ashcroft et al., hybridity refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zones produced by colonization (20). Besides, for Andrew Hammond, the ultimate meaning of hybridity is namely portraying the transcultural interaction between the original and the imperial practices, traditions, religions, and ideologies thus this leads to postcolonial identity forging, the presence of multicultural hybrid features in the native countries and the rise of the notion of Otherness. (222).

Also Lars Eckstein sees that this “ postcolonial hybridity ” does nothing but privileging the colonial centre in a way or another .(qtd. in Cheriet 76). Since it promotes the idea that , only literature that concerns the Western cannon deserve merit, whereas literature that concerns Africa or Asia is underestimated and given

minimal attention. This hybridity in literary texts comes out of the transcultural contact that postcolonial writers hold with the West. It is the way postcolonial literature employs multicultural traditions, religions, and ideologies in its texts to show the multicultural hybrid feature of its societies. (Cheriet 76).

In the same vein Hoogvelt believes that hybridity honors the superior cultural one owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the overlapping of two opposing cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference (158). That is to say, hybridity occurs when the colonial authority and hegemony try to change the identity of the Other. This intentional process of changing the colonized identity finally generates something new but still familiar. Hereby, the colonial power and the colonized identity are in a long-lasting struggle with the reality of latter culture that gives birth to a new in-between entity that is neither self nor other. It is a depiction of how new culture and identity are built under colonial oppression, and the contact between the colonizer and the colonized so, hybridity emerges from diverse aspects of colonization, which produce clash of cultures .

The concept of hybridity has been most recently associated with Homi K Bhabha whose analysis of colonized/colonizer relation stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he call “third space of enunciation “( 37). Hence , he highlights the presence of the 'Third Space' by arguing that when two intermingled cultures, ethics, and values of the colonizer and the colonized meet and co-exist in a single individual after a long era of colonialism . Homi Bhabha refers to this mixture as hybridity: “Bhabha has developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism!! Ad inequity (qtd . in Meredith 2).

Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural difference provides the conceptual vocabulary of hybridity and the Third Space. Bhabha's concept of hybridity is established on the ground of Bakhtin's concept of hybridization, on the one hand, which is defined as a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance; on the other hands, between two different linguistic consciousness, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor (Holquist 358).

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha says:

“When historical visibility has faded, when the present tense of testimony loses its power to arrest, then the displacements of memory and the indirections of art offer us the image of our psychic survival.” (18).

Bhabha declares that during decolonization era, the human values are exposed to displacement and fragmentation, along with his identity which is also subject to fragmentation and hybridization. He points out that the 'psychic survival' of culture is not reached, looking into the concept of hybridity as in-between third space that combines cultural differences of postcolonial epoch. Bhabha severely argues that hybridity is a challenge that stands in the face of any cultural purity. colonialism function to erase the native cultures and substitutes them with new hybrid ones. Bhabha contends that no culture is fixed or stable, since cultures overlap and melt. Hence, the outcome is mixture of cultures full of the other. (58).

Moreover Bhabha argues that, hybridity is perceived as problem related mainly with culture that should be solved among authorities, since these authorities for him are the only to have control over it. The issue of hybridity has nothing to do with descendants or families but it is rather a problem between the two diverse. He likewise sees hybridity



as challenging because of colonial delineation that portrays their colonies denial . Consequently, when an inferior culture clash and interweave with a superior one it ironically alienate their authorities (114) .

The notion of hybridity suggested by the theorist Homi Bhabha explains the identity formation and re-evaluates postcolonial identity assumptions within societies suffering from intervention of difference . Thus , they experience culture clashes as a result of the mingling cultures controlled by the dominant authorities .

## **2.2. Third Space**

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha has introduced the concept of third space . He states that “ the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space” (160). That ‘ ambivalent space ’ according to him refers to the ‘ Third Space ’- That uncertain, confused entity occurs as a result of the perplexity and the confusion of two conflicting cultures.

For Bhabha , this hybrid third space is an ambivalent state where cultural meaning and representation have ‘ no primordial unity or fixity’ (37). Consequently, a new identity emerges to substitute the old one and abolish all traditional practices. Also, according to him "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" (55). Ika and Wagner in the introduction to their book *Communicating in the Third Space*, seem to agree with Bhabha . They note that "the encounter of two social groups with different cultural traditions and potentials of power as a special kind of negotiation or translation . . . takes place in a Third Space of enunciation " (2).

Bhabha as well claims that , the attempts and strategies held by the colonizers to hybridize their colonized subjects and obliterate their indigenous identity leads to the rise of third space that is preliminary for postcolonial negotiation and

translation strategies .(37) . Equally important, he perceives that third space is the only chance to hold the burden of the meaning of culture (38).

In short , This hybrid position or what Homi K. Bhabha calls ‘ the third space ’ , is a manufactured space that encourages creativity and civil communication. Through that third space , one can maintain good relationship with his home of origin and , simultaneously , live and communicate with the other or the colonizer society . That is , he maintain a sense of belonging to both cultures and compromise between the two halves of his identity .

### **2.3. In-betweenness**

In-betweenness is another concept developed by Bhabha . It was formed in relation with identity formation and hybridity. Bhabha emphasizes the dominance of colonial authority and its culture is being upheaved and centralized by hybridity as mentioned earlier .At that level , cultural hybridity became unbalanced . Consequently , a gap in identity is created , which he refers to as " the tension of the opposition " , since he perceives identity as an artifact of two different cultures and ethnicities.(113).

### **2.4. Hybridity and Culture**

“ apparently dominated culture and the ‘ interpellated ’ subjects within it ‘are being’ swallowed up by the hegemony of empire .” (qtd. in Francis 53)

As mentioned previously , during the colonial era , the colonizer maintained its hegemony over its colonized territories following certain oppressive strategies . Its desire was to reconstruct anew, different identity for its colonized subjects , while the indigenous cultures of the colonized nations faced a sever denial and fogginess . Accordingly, colonized people developed a sense of inferiority .Beside , they were

displaced from their motherlands . The latter is when educated elites are used to guarantee total control over the colonies even after the formal independence . Thus , colonial mentality seek to forge and erase the features of the national identity such as language , identity , home , place , and substitute them with new hybrid ones .

Rutherford informs that “ all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity ” (211) , consequently , literature is a hybrid product .

“Postcolonial literature/s, therefore, as a produce and component of postcolonial culture is soaked up by and engendered within the ambience of hybridity Postcolonial text, therefore, is —a hybrid, a dynamic mixture of literary and cultural forms, genres, styles, languages, motifs, tropes and so forth .” (qtd .in Prayer 126).

Bhabha in *Culture's In Between* , mentioned the cultural contact zone or what he refers to as “ borderline affects and identifications ” (167) .These contact zones are areas or spaces where the overlapping actions , which are results of the conflicting species , shove hard the other as a matter of accommodation , assimilation and by force of resistance. That is to say , these contact zones function as motivators and facilitators that improve the transaction and translation between the opposing cultures . Moreover , the contact zones are where fragmented cultures meet , confront , clatter and finally integrate to create new hybrid identity .For Bhabha , exotic multiculturalism is the only thing that dissident societies being of hybrid identities may feel .( “Interview” 211).

Besides, since Cultures are neither unitary, nor dualistic as in the relation Self / Other , Cultural dimensions , like space and time become homogeneous and standardized or self-contained . Thus , they are never understood . Consequently , the birth of third space , which does not belong to non of the two sides ; self / other ,

superior/ inferior , first / third world , master / slave . Then, for Bhabha , meanings are basically produced in that , “ in-between space,” regardless to all cultural boundaries , antagonisms and any referential systems . (36) .

Accordingly, Bhabha believes that entirely all different forms of culture are in continuous process of hybridity (Rutherford “ Identity” 211). At this state , although the colonial era is over and the colonizers withdraw , they are in fact still present in their colonies . Not only that but , some of their former colonized subjects definitely become just like them .

## **2.5. Hybridity and Language**

In current literary studies language is considered as of the most discussed issues , since language evolves rapidly due to the rapidly changing world , which affects the masses reciprocal social interactions , either within one’s own indigenous social entourage or with the other communities at a larger scale .

Ashcroft et al. believe that “Nation language is thus a lived , dynamic and changing Phenomenon ...” (134) . Hence , it is strongly influenced by some hard changes and circumstances such as the colonial process and hegemony , which clearly results in language loss or hybridization in former colonies . Through marginalizing or silencing the least powerful languages and cultures, which are commonly the colonized ones, Language and culture death occur in some extreme cases of marginalization. Additionally, in his *Black Skin , White Masks*, Fanon extends that , possessing a language and possessing a culture gives rise to new meanings , for one single reason , that is the dominant prevailed culture is no more Westernized , but creolized and therefore hybrid (29).

Along with many other postcolonial theorists, Ashcroft is highly concerned with the interpolative function of language: “ The interpellation of imperial culture

and the appropriation and transformation of dominant forms of representation for the purposes of self-determination, focus with greatest intensity in the function of language” (qtd. in Francis 53). Interpellation refers to the means by which an entity exercises an ideology of cross-examine and dismantling ideological structures from within , through using the discourse and narrative of the predominant ideology. Also , for Ashcroft, “ the interpolation of imperial culture and the appropriation and transformation of dominant forms of representation for the purposes of self-determination, focus with greatest intensity in the function of language” (qtd. in Francis 53).hereby , the minorized category , or the colonized , can appropriate and transform the language of the predominant category , or the colonizer , for defensive purposes such as self-representation , self-determination to wreck the structures of that predominant entity from within .

In the core of identity lies language due to its significance in forming that identity. Accordingly, language development and changes , construction and conventions establish social identities . In that sense , identity is essentially shaped in language .

From his side, Bakhtin , from a linguistic perspective, presents the way in which language or a single sentence is double-voiced. Menard-Warwick defines this phenomenon as an “interweaving” of languages . also , Tholander & Aronsso claim that double-voiced discourse is “ another’s speech in another’s language ”, which “ manages to express two different intentions simultaneously ”.(volek 128) . Maynard, Carter speaks of “ multivoicing ”, as a process whereby speakers can “ move between voices as the context changes ”. Menard-Warwick addresses that : “ the multiple voices with multiple evaluations that the narrator dialogically draws upon to make sense of the changes taking place in her family, community, and nation”.(volek139) .Thereafter, linguistic hybridity is a kind of mixture and fusion of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance

but differentiated by other factors of those social utterances, Bakhtin assumes. In other words, it simultaneously designates the ability to be the same but different at once (20).

Further, Bakhtin divides linguistic hybridity into two types: the deliberate 'intentional' hybridity and the organic and the 'unintentional, unconscious' hybridity. The former is "internally dialogic" form, in which languages and ideologies are consciously set against each other. The latter intentional hybrid comes as a result of an artistic intention to dialogize hybridity, an artistic intention that produces disjunction rather than fusion" (Guendouzil 5). The latter, involve mixing and fusion. They are part and parcel of a natural process in language and cultural contact. (Guendouzil 5). Consequently, organic hybridity occurs when two languages fuse and mingle together, thus predominantly the languages change by the process of hybridization, in that, new meanings, symbols and language varieties are generated.

Carter explains, the mixing of voices in the production a hybrid discourse can be a creative and even socially productive act: "for the purpose of criticism, for the kind of banter and verbal duelling which reinforces group values and affiliations, or simply in order to express identities and values which are separate from the dominant discourses and which could not be altogether articulated by a single voice" (qtd. in Volek 79)

## **2.6. Hybridity and Literature**

" Postcolonial text is a hybrid, a dynamic mixture of literary and cultural forms, genres,

styles, languages, motifs, tropes and so forth" (Rutherford " Identity" xiv).

Postcolonial literature is basically hybrid in nature and form; although it is set in the present time, it is retrospectively looking to the colonial history. The colonial experience and past are stated at 'the third space' memories since it holds some of its traits. As mentioned earlier, all forms of culture are frequently in a continuous

process of hybridity (Rutherford 211) since postcolonialism itself is a continuity . Consequently, postcolonial literature is its product .

In the same perspective , Grobman states that :

“ [...] Hybridity does not privilege or subsume competing forms, and that it enables readers to escape limiting binaries by considering the countless relationships among a text's many variables, both within the text itself and with other texts. The hybrid text is a volatile mixture of parts that work against, within, and among one another and it is fraught with tensions and conflicts. However, these very qualities offer transformative possibilities for reading, interpretation, appreciation, politics and pedagogy” (xiv).

Hybridity allows the readers to pass any restrictions when confronting texts. Thus , it enable him to adjust and regenerates his understanding of difference about text at hand . Hence, Grobman outlines that a hybrid piece of literature is an impulsive mixture of various elements against, within , and among one another.

In *Identity :Community, Culture Difference* , The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha chapter , Bhabha considers postcolonial literature as “a symbol forming and subject-constituting, interpellative practices ” (210). Postcolonial literature portrays new meanings and unfold new perspectives for change , and calls for the fair formation of new symbols .

Besides, theorists of this era, such as Homi Bhabha and Mikhail Bakhtin have demonstrated the African novel as hybrid and polyphonic in nature. The term polyphony is coined by Mikhail Bakhtin , from a musical concept referring to the multiplicity of voices in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* . The term polyphony

literally means multi-voicedness ( Volek 138). In postcolonial fiction, the issue of hybridity is reflected through the distinctive and varied perspectives and voices of the different characters .

## **Conclusion**

After gaining formal independence, and in their way to sustain their indigenous identity or reconstruct separate identity, postcolonial people clash with the fact that their identity is torn into two halves. They found themselves strolling and swinging between their native identity and the new influenced one in an overwhelming society. This chapter was devoted to deal with two main notions in postcolonial literature and studies, identity and hybridity. First, we pated the concept of identity in terms of its quest construction and its crisis as well . In the second section, we discussed the notion of hybridity in the field postcolonial literature , starting with its definition . Then , we explained the concept of Third Space and In- Between-ness . After that, we moved to explore the notion of hybridity in relation to culture, language and literature.



## **Chapter Three**

### **The Crisis of Hybrid Identity in Chinua**

**Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*.**

## Chapter Three:

### The Crisis of Hybrid Identity In Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*

#### Introduction

#### 1. Overview

##### 1.1 The Author in Brief

One of Nigeria's greatest novelists, Chinua Achebe, fully **Albert Chinua lumogu Achebe**, was born on November 16, 1930, in Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria to an Igbo family. Achebe was brought up as a Christian as representatives of the British government that controlled Nigeria convinced his parents to abandon their traditional religion and follow Christianity. But his other relatives kept their traditional Igbo faith, so he was raised as a cultural crossroads. However, Achebe remained always curious about the native traditional Nigerian faith. He was educated at a government college in Nigeria, and graduated from the University College at Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1954.

Achebe attended the Church Missionary Society's school, where the primary language of instruction for the first two years was Igbo. At about eight, he began learning English. His late introduction to English allowed him to develop a sense of cultural pride and appreciation of his native tongue and values. Achebe's home fostered his understanding of both cultures: he read books in English in his father's library, and he spent a long time listening to his mother and sister tell traditional Igbo stories as well . At the university, Achebe decided to abandon his English name "Albert" in favor of the Igbo one "Chinua ".

Achebe joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation as a producer of radio talks. In 1956, he went to London to attend the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Staff

School. While in London, he submitted the manuscript of his first work, *Things Fall Apart* to a publisher. The novel was published in 1958 by Heinemann, a publishing firm that began a long relationship with Achebe and his works.

The Nigerian novelist is acclaimed for his unsentimental and realistic depictions of the social and psychological disorientation in the African communities, due to the imposed internalization and imposition of Western customs and values. His novels' subject matter ranges from the first contact of the African village with the white man, to the educated African's attempt to rebuild a separate and firm moral order and create an autonomous identity out of the changing values.

Chinua Achebe made it clear in some of his interviews that he is displeased by some books about Africa, written by some British authors such as Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) and John Buchan (1875–1940). Achebe believes that the stereotypical description and representation of Africa and Africans were inaccurate, insulting and misleading. (Chinua Achebe . interview by Robert Siegel).

Like many other African writers, Achebe believes that artistic and literary works must deal primarily with the social unrest and problems. He has said that "art is, and always was, at the service of man" (qtd in . Iniobong 250). In his essay "The Novelist as a Teacher", Achebe writes the following about his trilogy of books *Things Fall Apart* , *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God* : "I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past--with all its imperfections--was not one long night of savagery from which the first European acting on God's behalf delivered us" (qtd. in Mezu xi-xii). Although *Things Fall Apart* is set in the 1890s, *Arrow of God* in the 1920s, and *No Longer at Ease* in the 1950s, the three plots centre around the disturbing contradictions and clashes of cultures, religions, and

intentions of the Nigerians and those of the British colonizers resulting in personal tragedies (Bandeled xiii, Kandell 2).

## 1.2. The Novel

*No Longer At Ease* is the second novel in the African Trilogy and the continuation of the previous novel *Things Fall Apart*. The novel concerns the plight of Obi Okonkwo, as a postcolonial subject who belongs to the new generation. It depicts the rise of identity instabilities which are necessary and inevitable consequence of colonialism and the interaction with the western world. Most of the novel's actions occurs in the capital city of Lagos which represents the convergence of Europe and Africa.

*No Longer At Ease* is a novel of nineteen chapters, its title is chosen from the closing lines of T.S. Eliot's poem, *The Journey of the Magi* :

“ We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death” (Verses 40-43).

Through the nineteen chapters, Achebe depicts an educated young man from the newly independent Nigeria who finds himself compelled to involve in an illegal acts. Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist of *No Longer At Ease*, is trapped in uneasy situation, in a space between a diminishing colonialism and a newly emerging Nigeria. Thus, he is caught between two worlds; the traditional Africa and a changing new world. Further, the novel deals with the condition of the new Nigerian generation, especially the new generation who have been educated in the western world.

Obi Okonkwo , around whom the novel ‘ events are centred , is the grandson of Okonkwo the protagonist of “*Things Fall Apart*” ; however , the young Obi encounters complicated and serious issues concerning his identity such as the conflict between white and black culture , corruption , change of values and traditions and in-betweenness, most of it resulted from his academic life in England .

Obi received a scholarship to study law in England from The Umuofia Progressive Union (U.P.U) , hoping that he will serve back his country in return . Although this scholarship looks like a pleas for Obi at the beginning, it led to series of changes and events that ends up with him in prison eventually. While in England, the young man goes through some changes in his journey, as first step, Obi followed his desire to study English and abandons law. As many expatriates, Obi experiences nostalgic feelings of home, he devoted these feelings to write poems about his mother land Nigeria. Meeting Clara , a Nigerian nursing student, is another outstanding event in his journey , as he finds out that Clara is an Osu<sup>1</sup> , an outcast due to her ancestral past . This fact drives him to the end of his future because it opposes the Igbo tradition and his parents’ will as well.

Once back in Nigeria , after four years , Obi at first stays in Lagos with his friend Joseph . Obi is quickly given a post on the Scholarship Board of the Civil Service, by which he is also introduced to the world of bribery. At the beginning this world of corruption was rejected by Obi’s high standards and idealism, as he shows that he has no desire to play the role of the corrupt civil servant . At this point we begin to notice how Obi differentiates himself as an educated man, who belongs to the new generation, from the rest of his countrymen .

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<sup>1</sup> Among the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria the Osu are outcasts.a word used to describe a person dedicated to a deity . No one harms , interacts or marries an Osu. (Andrew walker. The story of Nigeria’s ‘untouchables’.2009).

Traditions and the clan obligations have a heavy impact on Obi. Although he was cut off from his roots after he was exposed to a new and different world in England, he discovers on his return that the status and impact of tradition are still strong. Consequently, Obi retreats under his mother's pressure and the Igbo traditions to cancel the idea of marrying Clara, which he reveals an honest will to marry her at the beginning even though she is an Osu.

As the events go on, Obi's life turns to be more uneasy and complicated, especially when he clashes with some financial difficulties. Since he is required to meet his family and the union duties, his finances are stretched beyond his capacity. He is supposed to start sending to his parents a monthly sum of money, pays for his brother's school fees and his mother's hospital fees when she is sick, sends a monthly sum to the Umuofia Progressive Union to pay back his school loan and the cost of the illegal abortion of Clara makes it worst.

In addition, Obi develops a sense of isolation from his culture and kinsmen due to his education and his social status, but he is trapped and surrounded. He can't escape his culture, the judgments of his community and its expectations as well.

After his mother's death, Obi falls into deep depression and instead of going home for the funeral, he thought that the money he would have spent to go and come back, would be better served in the funeral. By the end of the story, Obi's debilitation and collapse is more apparent even in his work. Accepting bribes, the practice which he first rejected and seen it as anachronistic behavior, that the new educated generation should abandon, he eventually starts to look at it as necessary evil.

The novel closes with Obi's trial, bringing us up to the scene that opened the story, Obi accepting a bribe convincing himself that it is the last one, then he discovers that the bribe was part of a sting operation.

### **1.3 . The Method**

This chapter will focus basically on the protagonist of *No Longer At Ease*, Obi Okonkwo. The character represents the colonized in the postcolonial era, and through Homi Bhabha's theoretical framework, the goal is demonstrating the contact zone where Obi co-exist and intercommunicate with the other or the colonizer culture and the result of that interaction. Consequently, the chapter will demonstrate; the postcolonial hybrid identity through Obi, who is cross-bred existing in an in-between space, also demonstrating hybridity on the social level.

## **2. The Question of Identity in No Longer At Ease**

*No Longer at Ease* is a literary example that portrays the plight of hybrid identity among Nigerian Ibo people. The pre-colonial as well as the postcolonial identity of Ibo people in Nigeria are disrupted and distorted by the colonial influence during the 1950s and 1960s. The colonial hegemony created a sense of lost and disorientation that left the Igbo people with fragmented identity. It all started with the previous missionaries in Nigeria which imposed their rule and administration upon Igbo people by introducing new social order and dividing the area into parts ruled by District Commissioners. The Igbos were appointed as the chiefs and messengers to help the colonizer. The colonial power disintegrated the triple system; consequently, it erased the colonized 'identity and traditional culture'. Also, that influence introduced them to the new western culture, education and law and order.

Further , the colonial influence introduced the Igbos to the new faith , Christianity , which made a severe change in their traditional and cultural manners . The traditional beliefs were substituted by new approaches , this made the society traps into chaos . The new Western influence among Ibos fostered the issues of identity that Achebe depicts through the novel.

Therefore, Chinua Achebe in *No Longer At Ease* demonstrates and explores how colonialism wrecked the Ibo identity and culture. The Igbo clan identity is no longer at ease as the one of the first novel , *Things Fall Apart* , identity of patriotic and loyal warriors , who represents the true values and beliefs of the old Umuofian Igbo society . The protagonist Obi Okonkwo lives a very different experience than his grandfather , the protagonist of the first novel , Obi faces a serious complexities concerning his identity and selfhood , as he adopts both ; the new western culture and his own traditional one . So he is struggling between the two overlapping identities .

Obi represents the crisis of hybrid identity and its complexities on the more personal level. He lost his connection to the pure pre-colonial selfhood, which is inevitable result of the colonial experience that exposed him to a direct connection and interaction with the other world and culture.

After coming back from England , Obi finds himself in a situation where he is no longer at ease . He lost his connection and sense of belonging to his home , identity and his self eventually . As a starting point , Obi reveals true attentions that he seeks to serve his country back . He also believes that the new educated generation in Nigeria uproots corruption , however he is traumatized by the fact that corruption and bribery are practiced even by those who supposed to represent law and order . Eventually , he ends up



committing the same things he rejected and fought in the beginning under the pressure of his Igbo cultural values and his society expectations .

Obi's parents , Isaak Okonkwo and Hannah , were convinced to converted to Christianity , consequently they found that this new faith is preventing them from practicing parts of their traditions . However , they keep acting according to the community culture , not to the Christian religion , since they belong to that community and they cannot split and isolate themselves completely from it . As a child , Obi's mother used to tell him traditional Nigerian folk-tales, which he loved. On the other side , his father considers these folk tales heathen rites that go against Christianity , thus he order his wife , who is a devout Christian woman , to stop teaching them to their children .

The fact that obi's identity is shaped by both the African and the western culture , makes him a good example of the post colonial subject with identity complexities and disorientation . He cannot clearly states that he is pure African , nor can he concededly identify with the European culture .Moreover , this fact caused him fail to retrieve his wrecked African identity , as he was unconsciously dismantled by his inner tendency to glorify the Other culture and lifestyle .

In chapter four , after coming back from England , Obi was the guest of honor at a well reception that was arranged by The Umuofia Progressive Union . In that event everyone was formally dressed to suit in the occasion except Obi , he was simply wearing a shirt sleeves , Achebe refers to that action as the first mistake “ Everybody was properly dressed in agbad<sup>2</sup> or European suit except the guest of honour, who appeared in his shirt

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<sup>2</sup> It is a four-piece male attire found among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, West Africa. The outer robe-from which the entire outfit derives the name agbada, meaning 'voluminous attire'.(Encyclopedia.Agbada.2020).

sleeves because of the heat. That was Obi's mistake Number One" (Achebe 26). In the same scene , the second mistake was also present , it is Obi informal way of speaking about education ; "Obi's English, on the other hand, was most unimpressive. He spoke 'is' and 'was' . He told them about the value of education" (Achebe 27). Hence , apparently there are things or rules Obi forgotten while he was in England for just under four years .

The dilemma of identity Obi is experiencing is shown through the courses of the novel . Obi cannot make a firm decision about which group he belongs to , for example; when he is talking to his old classmate Joseph he says , “ Your Nigerian police are very cheeky, you know ”( Achebe 59). Thereby , Obi is distancing and alienating himself from Nigerians using the word ‘ your ’ . However , later when he is talking to himself he states , “ What do our people say? ” (Achebe 78) . He refers to the Nigerians of his native village as his people . It seems that the alienation Obi is experiencing from his people and society leads him to miss his path , his old standards and values could not resist , then he finds himself trapped in moments of confusion and chaos.

In chapter five , in his way to visit Umofia , Obi took a wagon where he listen to songs from some Nigerian traders. Even though he has heard these song several times along his life, it never made sense to him, this was the first time he tried to translate the songs into English as a graduate of English literature . A sudden realization comes to his mind that through translation , he could understand the meanings of these traditional songs for the first time .

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It consists of a large, free-flowing outer robe (awosoke), an undervest (awotele), a pair of long trousers (sokoto), and a hat (fila).

“ [...]Obi knew the refrain, he tried to translate it into English, and for the first time its real meaning dawned on him. [...] On the face of it there was no kind of logic or meaning in the song. But as Obi turned it round and round in his mind, he was struck by the wealth of association that even such a mediocre song could have.” (Achebe 36).

Through this case , Achebe attempts to confirm that , as a subject who exists in postcolonial era , in some cases Obi understanding of his culture , which is significant part of his identity , requires that he needs the colonizer’s language . This indicates Obi's dependence on English , or the colonialists language , to express and even understand himself .

After coming back to Nigeria , Obi just looks more European than a Nigerian Igbo . Even though he loves his home, it seems that he starts to isolate himself from his countryman and splits from the clan traditions; simultaneously, he is deeply attracted and fascinated by the European culture. He no longer can retain a peaceful relationship neither with his family , nor with the whole culture of old Nigeria . For instance, when he decides alone on his marriage with clara , ignoring his Igbo traditions that prevents him to marry an Osu :

Obi's father's laughter vanished as it had come---without warning, leaving no footprints.

- ‘You cannot marry the girl,’ he said quite simply

- ‘Eh?’

- ‘I said you cannot marry the girl.’

- 'But why, Father?'

[...] 'But all that is going to change. In ten years thing will be quite different to what they are now.'

[...] Obi repeated his point again. What made an Osu different from other men and women? Nothing but the ignorance of their fore fathers. (Achebe 100-2).

So here again, the European education and the western influence rises his sense of alienation.

The above illustrative examples of Obi's confusion and sense of self loss demonstrate his plight with identity as a postcolonial subject, so he is doomed to experience this struggle in his life where he is never at ease.

## **2.1 . Achebe 's Language and style in Expressing Identity in No Longer at Ease**

For most postcolonial writers, restoring or creating an autonomous national identity as a unique entity far from the colonial influence and context, was and still the main concern. Chinua Achebe as the father of African literature succeeded to some extent to reach that goal. However he is subject to some criticism, concerning his choice to use English or the colonizer language in his writings, since language is considered as one of the basic elements to sustain identity.

From his perspective, Achebe in a talk at West Chester University commented that it is true that the English language cannot fully serve and can merely approximate the need to articulate his Igbo culture but the language itself is meant to be used as an instrument of "infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying him from within". (Gallagher .'Linguistic Power '). Further, he argues that, the aim of using English or the

colonizer language in general is to manipulate it, and makes it serve his own particular voice and culture, not to use it as a native speaker. He adds that through using the colonizer's language you can reach a global audiences, thus sharing and asserting your own experience and identity (Gallagher . 'Linguistic Power' ).

Chinua Achebe is one of those writers who managed to manipulate and subvert the Other's language and adopts it to serves his intentions and needs. This was through creating ' new ' and more African English.

“ I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.” ( Ezenwa 101) .

So , Achebe integrates some figures of the African oral traditions , untranslated terms , folktales , forms of speech , proverbs and other elements to portray a vivid image of his own culture . Thus, the novel is given a Nigerian or Ibo character and identity to provide the correct picture of the African societies. Achebe' s fellow the Nigerian, Cyprian Ekwensi, has also noted the African writers' prerogative for creating new patterns in English : “African writers in English consciously or unconsciously try to Africanise the English language by coloring it with African idioms or pidgin English or in any other way retaining the speech rhythms of the African language ”( 294) .

In his article ' English and the African writer ' Achebe stats that :

“ The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange

will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience .” (29).

Also , Achebe says in his other article ‘ The African Writer and the English Language ’ that ; he chooses to write in “ African English , to express a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-wide language .” (55 ).

Hereby , although *No Longer at Ease* is written in English , it is packed with native Nigerian traditional elements , such as folktales, proverb and rituals , in an attempt to demonstrate the sense of the Igbo culture . Further to prove that Africans are not primitive , inferior people as it was claimed by the colonizer , but they stand as a separate unique entity.

In an article entitled “ The Role of the Writer in a New Nation ” Achebe states that : “ I submit that those who can do the work of extending the frontiers of English so as to accommodate African thought patterns must do it through their mastery of English and not out of innocence” (160) . Achebe uses proverbs and oral stories extensively in *No Longer at Ease* , due to their important statuses in Nigerian culture , they also carry a specific meanings that differentiate the Igbos from the other culture ; consequently , the Nigerian identity is presented in the novel through these Nigerian specifics. The significance of these proverbs in Nigerians lives is illustrated by Achebe through various events in the novel, such as chapter eleven when Obi and Clara are talking about Obi's insurance , and she is trying to convince him to accept her offer of giving him a loan:

- ' [...] You know the proverb about digging a new pit to fill up an old one?

- 'Why did you trust so much money to that sly-looking man?'

- 'You mean Joe? He's a great friend of mine. He's a ward servant.'

- 'I didn't like his looks. What is the proverb about digging a new pit to fill up an old one?'

- 'I have always said you should go and study Ibo. (Achebe 82-83)

Through this scene, Achebe indicates that native Nigerians associate almost every situation in life with a proverb, since the system of values and moralities in Igbo culture is based mainly on these folktales, oral stories and proverbs. This system is equivalent to the Biblical stories in Christianity, which is associated with Europeans in general. Accordingly, when Clara chooses to refer to these proverbs and use them in some life situations, this reveals her respect and attachment to her traditional identity, also Clara suggests in the same scene that Obi should study Ibo culture and traditions, because she believes that they can teach and guide him in his life. The scene shows how Achebe distinguishes his identity from the other, also it gives the impression that national identity can be found in each part of the Ibo characters.

Since the character Obi Okonkwo is the representation of Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, he attempts to show through this character that, even though Obi's father abandons Obi's mother to teach him Nigerian folktales, ironically, these prohibited folk-tales which represent the African identity, awaken Obi's love of literature and narration. This fact pushed him to abandon law and choose English literature as a course of study. Moreover, poems that Obi composed while he was in England are written in English; however, they are for the sake of Nigeria, just like Achebe's novels. Here, Chinua Achebe demonstrates that despite the use of English language, the pure national identity is deeply rooted in Obi's character.

### 3. The Exploration of Hybridity in *No Longer at Ease*

The hybrid identity nature of the post colonial situation in *No Longer at Ease* is portrayed not only through the character of Obi Okonkwo, yet in the fabric of the his community as a whole. Achebe travels with the reader to different places that symbolize the ‘ third space’, with their combination of Nigerian and European cultures.

Reading through the first chapter , we notice that Achebe sketches the fusion of the two cultures and the contact zone in which Obi represents the hybrid result . This result is the product of that double heritage world, where Obi is struggling between his desire to assert his traditional values and the necessary change in his life. Here, Achebe also dramatizes the unstable structure of values of that hybrid space .

During upbringing their children, Obi’s parents have clearly insisted upon diverse aspects of the hybrid nature of their town. As the village catechist, Obi’s father has always stressed the Christian nature of his family, on the other hand Obi’s mother made an attempt to modify this nature through Nigerian folktales. Thus, since his childhood obi develops a double sides’ heritage, where his two worlds are overlapping . Hence, he was exposed to a division as well as an alienation which intensify his hybrid identity .While growing up, obi faced difficulties with translating his bible lessons, and narrating old Igbo folk-stories at school as well. In chapter six , where obi has a flashback to his childhood where he, his brothers and sisters lived in a city to which they felt no sense of belonging. As they were not allowed “to accept food in the neighbours’ houses” because their food was offered to idols; “That fact alone set her children apart from all others for, among the Ibo, children were free to eat where they liked .“( Achebe 45) .

In chapter two , in the suburb of Ikoyi , that was once a European reserve , things changed :



“ It was once a European reserve. But things had changed, and some Africans in 'European posts' had been given houses in Ikoyi. Obi Okonkwo, for example lived there, and as he drove from Lagos to his flat he was struck again by these two cities in one. It always reminded him of twin kernels separated by a thin wall in a palm-nut shell. Sometimes one kernel was shiny-black and alive, the other powdery-white and dead. ” (Achebe 15) .

The area turned to a place where Europeans and Nigerians with " European posts " co-exist. This illustration emphasizes Bhabha 's notion of third space.

Another scene where the presence of the European culture in Nigeria is quite apparent , is the restaurant where Joseph took Obi for dinner, it is owned by an old , bossy English woman , also it is crowded by mostly Europeans . The food and the way it was served are signs of the hybrid nature of the place and the outstanding presence of the western culture. (Achebe 27-9). Through this scene, Achebe symbolizes the postcolonial world where cultural purity does not exist. Scenes similar to this recur over and over again in the novel to illustrate the presence of colonialists in Africa and the extent of their influence.

The above examples are used in the novel to portray the overlapping cultures and identities , that characterise the postcolonial situation .

At the end of chapter five , an interesting event brings to the surface the issue of religion to depict the extent of the hybrid nature that dominates the postcolonial societies . At Obi graduation ceremony , an elder proposes to serve kola nuts as offering , as part of the inhabitants believes that giving an offering to the town's rainmaker as they

believe by doing so , it would not rain. Nevertheless, Obi's father, who is a catechist, rejects the offer considering it improper and against his faith as a Christian :

[...] bring us a kola nut to break for this child's return.

This is a Christian house, “ replied Obi's father

A Christian house where kola nut is not eaten? sneered the man.

“ Kola nut is eaten here,' replied Mr Okonkwo, ' but not sacrificed to idols.”(Achebe 40) .

After a long argument, they agree to serve kola nuts in Christian fashion : “ 'And we shall break it in the Christian way,' he said as he fished out a kola nut.” (Achebe 40) . “ [...] He took the saucer, drew up his knees together to form a table and placed the saucer there. He raised his two hands, palms facing upwards, and said: 'Bless this kola nut so that when we eat it it will be good in our body in the name of Jesu Kristi. As it was in the beginning it will be at the end. Amen.' Everyone replied Amen ...” (Achebe 41). Here then, the action reflects how they end up to a compromising agreement. Despite their differences, both cultures are mixed and considered. However , it also shows that religion , despite its status , in postcolonial Nigeria is no longer at ease , it is subject to constant modification and change under the pressure of both parts and cultures .

In addition , the character of Isaac Okonkwo reflects the instable system of values in postcolonial Nigeria. Despite his keen reaction defending his faith, as a devote Christian , in the above example , he still conflict himself and still cannot oppose his clan clearly and completely . When Obi tells him about his will to marry Clara , Isack reaction was stiff and ambiguous . “We are Christians,” he said. “ But that is no reason to marry free.” (Achebe 101), however he also declare that , “ But this thing is deeper than you think.”

(Achebe 101) . Then he adds, “Osu is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you, my son, not to bring the mark of shame and of leprosy into your family” (Achebe 101)

### **3.1 . Code-Switching and Hybridity : The Author Motives**

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication , code switching refers to Bilingual speakers shifting from one language to another. So is the practice of changing between two or more linguistic varieties or languages while speaking . (*Chandler and Munday* )

Monica (1988) states that code-switching is “ the use of more than one language in the course of a communicative episode” (1). This phenomenon is employed deliberately or consciously by bilinguals or multilinguals to create textual and cultural hybridity . Bilingualism and biculturalism have a very immediate impact on the make-up of literary works of bilingual and bicultural authors with immediate linguistic traces of bilingual and bicultural mosaic of textual creation ( Hamamra and Qararia 126 ).

Although Chinua Achebe was clear stating that he prefers to use the colonizer’s language in his writings, even though he is still proud of his roots and origins. In his novel *No Longer at Ease*, Achebe adds that hybrid touch through the use of special type of code switching not only to mirror the divers identities and worlds existing in that postcolonial novel, but also to assert the native Nigerian identity in his own style.

In *No Longer at Ease* , Igbo , is the mother tongue of Obi and most of the Umofian characters as well . Over the novel, Achebe renders Igbo into English language through the mouths of Umofian characters using songs, proverbs, folktales or expressions derived from their traditional tribal life. This is done purposely by Achebe to emphasize the Umofian culture which encode the system of traditional values. Thus, even when Achebe renders the

native Igbo style to English , the communicative course still denotes a Umofian traditional perspective.

When Christopher looks for words of encouragement , he reverts to Igbo , after using sentences in English , he uses the Umofian tale of the bedbug which is considered as traditional heritage to advice Obi :

“After one more failure Obi had been advised not to try to see Clara again in her present frame of mind . 'She will come round,' said Christopher. 'Give her time.' Then he quoted in Ibo the words of encouragement which the bedbug was said to have spoken to her children when hot water was poured on them all. She told them not to lose heart because whatever was hot must in the end turn cold.” (Achebe 120)

Again in chapter five , when Obi accused Joseph of having a “colonial mentality “(Achebe 32) , the latter’s reaction defending himself was in Igbo : “ Call it what you like,” said Joseph in Igbo , then he turns back to English “ You know more book than I, but I am older and wiser. And I can tell you that a man does not challenge his chi<sup>3</sup> to a wrestling match.” (Achebe 32). Hence, resorting to Igbo in such situations is a strong instrument that stands to encode and convey cultural and traditional meanings, so the characters are asserting their native identity.

In addition, Ibo represents the language of the Umofian clan , thus a sense of brotherliness and ethnic fellowship . Speaking Ibo in England gave Obi too much pleasure as it creates in his heart a feeling of comradeship .

“ He spoke Ibo whenever he had the least opportunity of doing so . Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to find another Ibo-speaking student in a London bus. But when

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<sup>3</sup> Chi is derived from African Igbo origins .in Nigeria , chi refers to a type of god , higher spiritual body , , supreme being , guardian angel , personnel spirit , soul , spirit-double etc.(E. Elochukwu Uzukwu195-196).

he had to speak in English with a Nigerian student from another tribe he lowered his voice. It was humiliating to have to speak to one's countryman in a foreign language , especially in the presence of the proud owners of that language. “ (Achebe 39).

The status of Ibo language in Obi's heart is reflected in some example in the novel. Like when he uses formal English at work office . However , when he speaks to some of his Umofian friends and does not want Miss Tomlison , his British office coworkers , to understand Obi switches to Igbo as sign of the lack of membership acknowledgment for Miss Tomlison , “ He sent for Charles and asked him in Igbo (so that Miss Tomlinson would not understand) why he had not fulfilled his promise.” (Achebe 74). This scene indeed reinforces the idea of brotherhood and rooted tribal ties through the use of shared mother tongue.

Again , when Obi was requested for a ‘ favour ‘ by Mr Mark , a fellow kinsman, the conversation is switched to Igbo .

'And what can I do for you?'

To his amazement Mr Mark replied in Ibo:

'If you don't mind, shall we talk in Ibo? I didn't know you had a European here.'

'Just as you like. Actually I didn't think you were Ibo. What is your problem?' He tried to sound casual (Achebe 65)

'Well, it is like this. I have a sister who has just passed her School Certificate in Grade One. She wants to apply for a Federal Scholarship to study in England.'

Although he spoke in Ibo, there were some words that he had to say in English.

Words like 'School Certificate' and 'scholarship' . He lowered his voice to a whisper when he came to them.

'You want application forms?' asked Obi.

'No, no, no. I have got those. But it is like this. I was told that you are the secretary of the Scholarship Commission and I thought that I should see you. We are both Ibos and I cannot hide anything from you. It is all very well sending in forms, but you know what our country is. Unless you see people ..." . (Achebe 66)

The conversation gives the impression that Obi has obligations towards the clan and all who belongs to it, so when Mr Mark uses the fact that “ We are both Ibos and I cannot hide anything from you ” , he is trying to convince Obi by suggesting or hinting to the clan values and obligations . Through this symbolic image , Achebe brings to the reader mind the fact that , for Umofians the prime duty and obligations must be for the clan , hence , an acknowledgement of membership and in-grouping .

Also, using the same language creates a sense of belonging and sociability. When Obi and Clara meet at the same ship coming back from Britain, they start interacting with each other at the beginning in English. However when Obi got sick she starts to address him in Igbo . “ [...] But then she had spoken in Ibo, for the first time, as if to say, 'We belong together: we speak the same language.' And she had appeared to show some concern” (Achebe 20). Yet, the next morning the conversation was intentionally switched to English, as Clara was afraid from her feeling of personal attachment to Obi.

'Thank you for the tablets,' he said in Ibo.

'Did they make you feel better?' she asked in English.

'Yes, very much.'

'I am glad,' she said, and passed.( Achebe 20)

However, the presence of the other culture's elements in all these scenes cannot be denied, as the character always diverges to English intentionally or unconsciously.

Code switching in the novel cannot be done out of coincidence or innocent, indeed Achebe's motive is to stress the fact that hybridity is actually planted in the fabric of his postcolonial society, however the pure Nigerian spirit still exists and the colonial hegemony could not erase it completely. Also he emphasizes his idea that language can carry meaning regardless if it is the colonized language. The colonizer language in fact can serve the colonized intentions if well used. Achebe believes that the other language is able to carry the weight of his African experience, through Africanising the English language by coloring it with African idioms or Pidgin English or in any other way.

#### **4. Towards a Possible Traditional Change and Multicultural Acceptance**

Shaping the new postcolonial identity of African societies is for sure strongly affected by the colonial experience. These societies are hardly struggling to keep their identity and traditions. However, simultaneously they cannot escape or isolate themselves from the new standards and cultural elements that were imposed on them due to the colonial situation. Consequently, the attempt to reconcile and compromise between the two worlds and heritages led to the hybrid nature of these newly independent societies, which are a fertile land for constant traditional and social change and multiculturalism, thus a social unrest.

In *No Longer at Ease*, the tension between tradition and modernity can be recognized as one of the major themes, the new Nigerian generation is tempted to

abandon its identity and to cut off its roots with the tribal lifestyle and values. Achebe traces the heavy impact and the cumulative effects of colonialism, which fostered the social dilemma facing the newly freed Nigeria.

The contrast between modernity and traditions in *No Longer at Ease* shows itself mostly in the conflict between urban standards, values and nature and rural ones: “Going from the Lagos mainland to Ikoyi on a Saturday night was like going from a bazaar to a funeral” (Achebe 15). This description can truly emphasize the distinction between the two.

Among the city specifications illustrated in *No Longer at Ease* are cultural variety, liberation from tribal life and taboos and sexual freedom. The scene of Obi's evening with Clara and their friends, Christopher and Bisi, at Lagos nightclub “The Imperial” (Achebe 84-7), in which Achebe vividly depicts the atmosphere of that night, portrays how the new generation is dragged to the other side. Through this merging with colonial, westernized modernity, it is tempted to change and to have more acceptance to tolerate and indulge the European culture on the account of native traditional one.

The issue of traditional change, and the conflict between the westernised imposed modernity and Nigerian tradition shows also in the status of Christianity in the Igbo society. Unlike the first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in the second one, Igbo Christians reached the point that they would suppress their traditions for the sake of Christianity. This emphasizes how the missionaries efforts succeed on the long-term to implant in people's minds new values and thoughts, and more, convincing them to abandon their traditional religions.

Obi's father, Isaac Okonkwo, since his converting to Christianity, he has given the priority to the new faith over the Igbo one. He started to identify himself as a person



who belongs to “the people of the Church.”( Achebe 45) Instead of an Nwoye . This was the same with his wife, Hannah who also converted to that new religion , and when it comes to her faith , she “ sometimes shows more zeal than even her husband ” (Achebe 45). The consequences of this actions on the adult Obi is tragic, he lost both his traditional culture due to European influence and internalization , and believing in the new faith because of his parents , as he always thought about standing up and telling his father : “Father, I no longer believe in your God” (Achebe 44 ).

Hereupon, Achebe reveals the temptation of that rapidly changing society coupled with the impact of colonial hegemony. Using the novel and its characters as a keen metaphor to present clearly the divided Nigerian society, along with the colonial effects, which brought and implanted among the natives new principles which soon became accepted by a large number of Igbos, especially the young generation. Consequently, it enhances the issue of hybridity in the Nigerian society.

## **Conclusion**

In this last chapter, we tried to explore the issue of identity crisis in postcolonial Nigeria through the work of Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, as a postcolonial writer who clearly clashes with this problem .

The presentation of the chapter was through four basic sections . At first , an overview which includes a brief biography about the author Chinua Achebe and the plot summary concerning *No Longer at Ease* , was presented . In the next section , we exhibit the way Achebe establishes and expresses the issue of identity through the novel . Then , the concept of hybridity and some of its extensions was tackled . The final section dealt with the theme of cross-culture , traditional change and multiculturalism, which is vigorously present in *No Longer at Ease* .

Though the analysis of *No Longer at Ease* , we deduce that Achebe adeptly treats the issue of identity crisis in postcolonial Nigeria . he demonstrates how this dilemma affect almost every part in the lives of postcolonial subject , especially the new generation . despite the obvious and inevitable consequences of the contact and impact of the colonial hegemony , Achebe through his style emphasizes on the native identity of the Ibo people , and shows how this identity is deeply rooted in theme regardless to the sharp change in their lives and society . the fragmented and indistinct identity of the protagonist , Obi Okonkwo , is main interest of the study , it shows how this error in his identity led to his downfall eventually. .

## **General conclusion**

## General conclusion

Exploring postcolonial literature in brief, including its emergence, its relation with the colonial experience and the basic notions this type of literature represents, in general, was the endeavour behind this humble research. But, to be more precise, post colonial identity and hybridity were the main focus of the exploration. As revealed through the research courses, for many postcolonial theorists Postcolonialism indeed existed long before gaining formal independence and freedom. However this concept still subject to thorough debates and diverse views concerning its exact definition. The critics views range and distinct, some of them believe that the notion refers to the historical era that directly follow the independence of a certain county. While others claim that the term actually pacts all what concerns the post colonial societies, from the very first moment of contact between the colonized and the colonizer till the present moment.

Since postcolonial literature is concerned, the study obviously focused on the analysis of the novel, as the most preferred genre for postcolonial writers. The novel indeed gained this status due to its power of representation that bring to the surface the true identity of people or a nation, depicting the correct history and giving the right to those who have been silenced to speak and assert their existence. Commonly, postcolonial literature is the production of those writers who came from a postcolonial entourage. These writers motives are generally to unveil and portray the true image of the colonial hegemony and its devastating effects on their societies, defending or asserting their autonomous identity and restoring their traditional heritage and history. Moreover, postcolonial writers devote their works against imperialism, oppression, othering, racial prejudice, marginality, etc, not only because these notions were used against their societies, but also were used by the colonizer as a cover to justify its

oppressive and inhuman deeds . In that sense , these writers share a common background and endeavours as far as most of them demonstrate common notions in the field , each one in his own way .

Identity can be recognized as a crucial notion in the field of postcolonial literature and it attracts a great deal of interest indeed . Yet , due to the pressure of the colonial hegemony and its keen presence in postcolonial societies , the notion of identity was and still subject to constant change , nevertheless this power and presence could not completely erase the native identity .Consequently , postcolonial subject are trapped in the face of this plight .They no longer can make a definite decision or clearly chose to which part they adhere ; whether their native traditional identity , which seem that it cannot resist or keep up with the rapidly and constantly changing world , or the new westernized one . Hereby , the postcolonial societies are standing at the crossroads with a heavy inner struggle , that eventually creates a gap that divide the one space to two conflicting and overlapping spaces .

Consequently , a pure and unique postcolonial identity no longer exists .After gaining independence, postcolonial subject are unable to achieve or even preserve their native identities . This dilemma is fostered by different factors such as , the rapidly changing and growing world , globalization and multiculturalism , these are some of the most outstanding elements , coupled with the effects of colonialism , that directs the postcolonial writers attention toward the issue of identity .

Through their writing , postcolonial writers attempt to embrace their native identity and show that this identity is deeply rooted in their societies , despite the colonial hegemony , its lasting consequences or the domination of the other new elements that nourish the constant change in their societies .This struggle is basically the reason behind

being lost in this new world , postcolonial subjects are unable to affirm the right place where they belong . This dilemma paved the way for the crisis of identity ; therefore , the latter presents one of the most debatable , outstanding and explored themes in the field of post colonial literature .

Establishing one's identity indeed require some crucial elements ,which postcolonial writings mostly portray . However , the consequences and the effects as well , of the colonial experience cannot be denied , passed or escaped . It is true that some postcolonial societies had succeed before colonialism to live in peace and harmony , and they could preserve and bequest their identities , systems of values and traditions for consecutive generation . Yet , with the rise of new life order and regimes , mainly due to colonialism , hereby , everything started to fall apart . In addition, the colonial power worked on creating new social structure and implanting new ideas and values and, specially through the elites who were manipulated and used as a bridges between the colonizer and the colonized . All these processes together contributed in the process of alienating the colonized people from their own home, culture, tradition, and even from the whole world.

The process of erasing the colonized identity and implanting new values , was mainly endeavored to sustain power and exploit the territories and their people. Creating new post colonial subjects , who cannot clearly ascribe themselves to the natives nor to westerners , led to a growing multiculturalism in the one society , consequently cross-culture and overlapping traditions and values , thus the emergence of new hybrid identities .

Since they are connoted , post colonial writers sought to use their works to portray and depict the two notions , identity and hybridity . These works present the main

elements that construct identity such as , culture , religions , system of values , language and others . However , the debate between postcolonial writers still exist , since they have different views specially when it comes to what language they should use to present their people and societies . This issue is highly controversial , because many post colonial writers believe that using a foreign language , specifically the colonizer language , means the centralization of the colonizer , thus empowering the western literature on the account of the native one . Though other writers such as Chinua Achebe , have another opinion , they defend themselves based on the idea that , using the colonizer language can actually universalize the experience of their societies and people , and it does not necessarily means that you are abandoning or forging your own identity .

In the field of post colonial literature , the issue of identity is coupled with the one of hybridity , since it is also crucial concept in the field and attract many writers and researchers . Postcolonial prose mostly includes the quality of mixing cultures and voices , and shows how post colonial subject resist to preserve their native identity with the growing impact of the new regimes . Communicating , dressing , behaving and the way of thinking are among the signs that distinct the hybrid characters portrayed in postcolonial novels , from the rest of the characters . Postcolonial writers assert through their literature the fact that hybrid identity indeed exist in their postcolonial societies , also declaring that postcolonial people cannot escape this inevitable fact , the latter are becoming more and more exposed to multiculturalism , thus a crisis of identity . Hence , postcolonial literature is used as an instrument to motivate people to regain , assert and preserve their native identities.

As this study shows , Chinua Achebe work , *No Longer at Ease* , sketches almost all the elements discussed above . The novel depicts almost every important issue that faces the writer in his post colonial society , especially the notions of identity and

hybridity . Although Chinua Achebe is subject to some criticism concerning his choice to write in the colonizer language about the colonial experience , his works indeed proficiently present his people struggle and portray the traumatizing effect of the interaction and contact with the colonial world on his society . Chinua Achebe managed to portray the issue of identity plight in postcolonial Nigeria in the courses of his Novel *No Longer at Ease* , in which he depicts this distorted and double faced identity mainly through the characters , their way of thinking and how they perceive each other .He further demonstrates the effects of this crisis on the society , including most of its elements , and its people , especially the new generation .

Chinua Achebe through *No Longer at Ease* presents the most significant issues and problems related to identity . The double faced heritage and in-betweeness are an outstanding issues in the novel , some characters , as postcolonial subjects , are used to present the hybride result in the new postcolonial world .Obi Okonkwo , the protagonist of *No Longer at Ease* , along with other character , is used to perfectly depict the plight of the new generation , specifically the elites , in that postcolonial hybrid society . Moreover Achebe in the novel dramatizes the unstable and fragile social structure and values that dominate most of postcolonial communities , the people struggle to find their right space and the dilemma of being lost between the desire to assert their native identity and keeping up with social change .

In addition , Achebe highlights the problem of language as a crucial part in making ones' identity . Since he prefers to use English language to mirror the identity and struggle of his postcolonial society , he renders Igbo style into English language through the mouths of Umofian characters to emphasize the Umofian native culture . Thus , even when Achebe renders the native Ibo style to English , the communicative course in the novel still denotes a native Nigerian or Umofian traditional perspective.



In brief, Chinua Achebe as postcolonial writer have almost the same perspective as the majority of writers in the field of postcolonial literature. In *No Longer at Ease* he treats the issue of identity construction under the pressure of colonial impact and the interaction with western education and standards. The novel further portray the Igbos strife with the rapid westernization of their society, as it shows that the new generation is drifting away from their tribal value and traditions, which creates a cultural clash, a growing sense of lost, alienation and division in the one society. Also the literary tools in the novel like language and code switching are used to assert and construct identity by Chinua Achebe.

## Recommendations for Further Research

Since the exploration and the findings of any study generate another questions and suggestion , the door hereby is open for further researches which may include :

- A deep study concerning the colonial history and its effect specifically on language will be worthy .
- Another study may be carried out on how identity is presented through the female characters in the novel *No Longer at Ease* can add more explanation and data .
- A comparison between the first novel , *Things Fall Apart* , and the present novel , *No Longer at Ease* , to explore how Achebe constructs and depicts identity may enrich the field .

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## ملخص

في الأدب و الدراسات ما بعد استعمارية تعتبر معضلة الهوية و التهجين مبحثا بارز الأهمية. البحث عن الذات أو الهوية الوطنية الحقيقية بعيدا عن مختلف المؤثرات و خاصة التأثير الإستعماري في هوية الشعوب الخاضعة أو تلك التي سبق أن خضعت للإستعمار , يعد موضوعا ملفتاً و ذا أهمية . إن الغرض الاساسي من هذه الأطروحة هو دراسة التأثير و المخلفات الثقافية للهيمنة الاستعمارية على المستعمرات و شعوبها . كما تهدف أيضا إلى تحليل أسلوب و طرح رؤية أحد أبرز الكتاب الافارقة شينوا اشيببي لمفهوم الهوية الهجينة في روايته ” لم يعد مريحا “ . تقدم الدراسة أيضا تحليلا فيما يخص توظيف الكاتب لأسلوبه , شخصيات روايته , إستخدامه للغة و التناوب اللغوي و توظيف موضوع التقاليد الجديدة و المتغيرة لإبراز و عرض معضلة الهوية الهجينة في الرواية . إنجاز هذه الدراسة يعتمد بشكل رئيسي على نظرية ” ما بعد الاستعمار “ مرفقة بشكل جزئي بنظرية ” الفضاء الثالث “ للمُنظر هومي بهابها , لإثبات أن الرواية مكرسة لتعكس أزمة الهوية بعد الإستعمار , و تكشف أسلوب و منهجية المستعمر في تهجين المجتمعات واستمرار تأثيره على هوية الشعوب حتى بعد إستقلالها .